



A HISTORY
SEPOY WAR IN INDIA.

1857—1858.

BY
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AUTHOR OF THE "HISTORY OF THE WAR IN AFGHANISTAN"

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PREFACE TO VOL. II.

When the first volume of this book was published, I had little expectation that the second would be so long in course of completion, as the result has shown it to have been. In truth, I had not measured aright the extent of the work before me. But when I came to take account of the wealth of my materials, and to reflect upon the means of converting them into history, I saw clearly that the task I had undertaken was a more arduous and perplexing one than I had originally supposed.

It is not difficult to make the reader understand my perplexities; and I hope that, understanding, he will sympathise with them. The events to be narrated covered a large area of space, but were compressed within a small period of time. Chronologically they moved along parallel lines, but locally they were divergent and distracting. The question was how it was best to deal historically with all these synchronous incidents. To have written according to date, with some approach to fidelity of detail, a

number of separate narratives, each illustrative of a particular day, or of a particular week, would have been easy to the writer, and would in some sort have represented the character of the crisis, one of the most distinguishing features of which was derived from the confusion and distraction engendered by the multiplicity of simultaneous outbursts in different parts of the country. This mode of treatment, however, though it might accurately reflect the situation, was not likely to gratify the reader. The multiplicity of personal and local names rapidly succeeding each other would have bewildered him, and no distinct impression would have been left upon his mind. But though the nature of the subject utterly forbade all thought of unity of place and unity of action, with reference to the scope of the entire work, there was a certain unification of the several parts which was practicable, and which suggested what might be called an episodic treatment of the subject, with such connecting links, or such a general framework or setting, as historical truth might permit. And, in fact, different parts of the country were so cut off from each other when mutiny and rebellion were at their height, that each series of operations for the suppression of local revolt had a separate and distinct character. Certainly, in the earlier stages of the War, there was no general design—little co-operation or cohesion. Every man did what was best in his eyes to meet with vigour and sagacity an unexpected crisis. The cutting of our telegraph-wires and the interruption of our posts were among the first hostile efforts of the insurgents in all parts of the country. Joint action on a large scale was thus rendered impossible, and at the commencement of the War it would scarcely have been desirable. For our people had to deal promptly

with urgent symptoms, and references and consultations would have been fatal to success.

Thus circumstanced with respect to the component parts of this History, I could not easily determine to what particular events it would be best to give priority of narration. One thing soon became unpleasantly apparent to me. I had made a mistake in forecasting the plan of the entire work, in an "Advertisement" prefixed to the First Volume. It was impossible to write adequately, in this instalment of my book, of all the operations which I had originally intended to record. With materials of such great interest before me, it would have been unwise to starve the narrative; so I thought it best to make confession of error, and to expunge my too-hasty promises from subsequent editions of the work. In pursuance of this revised scheme, I was compelled to put aside much that I had written for this Second Volume, and though this has necessarily retarded its publication, it has placed me so much in advance with the work to be accomplished, that I hope to be able to produce the next volume after a much shorter interval of time.

The selection made for this volume from the chapters which I had written may not perhaps be the best, but it is at least sufficiently intelligible. After describing the earlier incidents of the mutiny, as at Meerut and Delhi, at Benares and Allahabad, and at different stations in the Punjab, I have narrated, up to a certain point, those two great series of operations—the one expedition starting from Bengal with troops drawn from the Littoral, the other from the North-Western Frontier, with forces derived from the Hill Stations and the Punjab—which were consummated in the capture of Delhi

and the first relief of Lucknow. In the one I have traced the movements of Neill and Havelock, under the direction of Lord Canning, and in the other of Anson, Barnard, Wilson, and Nicholson, with the aid and inspiration of Sir John Lawrence. It is by thus following the fortunes of individuals that we may best arrive at a just conception of the general action of the whole. For it was by the energies of individual men, acting mostly on their own responsibility, that little by little rebellion was trodden down, and the supremacy of the English firmly re-established. It will be seen that I have adhered very closely to pure narrative. The volume, indeed, is a volume of fact, not of controversy and speculation; and as it relates to the earlier scenes of the great struggle for Empire, it is mostly an account of military revolt and its suppression.

Dealing with the large mass of facts, which are reproduced in the chapters now published, and in those which, though written, I have been compelled to reserve for future publication, I have consulted and collated vast piles of contemporary correspondence, and entered largely into communication, by personal intercourse or by letter, with men who have been individually connected with the events described. For every page published in this volume some ten pages have been written and compiled in aid of the narrative; and if I have failed in the one great object of my ambition, to tell the truth, without exaggeration on the one hand or reservation on the other, it has not been for want of earnest and laborious inquiry or of conscientious endeavour to turn my opportunities to the best account, and to lay before the public an honest exposition of the historical facts as they have been unfolded before me.

Still it is probable that the accuracy of some of the details in this volume, especially those of personal incident, may be questioned, perhaps contradicted, notwithstanding, I was about to say, all the care that I have taken to investigate them, but I believe that I should rather say "by reason of that very care." Such questionings or contradictions should not be too readily accepted; for, although the authority of the questioner may be good, there may be still better authority on the other side. I have often had to choose between very conflicting statements; and I have sometimes found my informants to be wrong, though apparently with the best opportunities of being right, and have been compelled to reject, as convincing proof, even the overwhelming assertion, "But, I was there." Men who are personally engaged in stirring events are often too much occupied to know what is going on beyond the little spot of ground which holds them at the time, and often from this restricted stand-point they see through a glass darkly. It is hard to disbelieve a man of honour when he tells you what he himself did; but every writer, long engaged in historical inquiry, has had before him instances in which men, after even a brief lapse of time, have confounded in their minds the thought of doing, or the intent to do, a certain thing, with the fact of having actually done it. Indeed, in the commonest affairs of daily life, we often find the intent mistaken for the act in the retrospect.

The case of Captain Rosser's alleged offer to take a Squadron of Dragoons and a Troop of Horse Artillery to Delhi on the night of the 10th of May (illustrated in the Appendix) may be regarded as an instance of this confusion. I could cite other instances. One will suffice:—A military officer of high rank, of

stainless honour, with a great historical reputation, invited me some years ago to meet him, for the express purpose of making to me a most important statement, with reference to one of the most interesting episodes of the Sepoy War. The statement was a very striking one; and I was referred, in confirmation of it, to another officer, who has since become illustrious in our national history. Immediately on leaving my informant, I wrote down as nearly as possible his very words. It was not until after his death that I was able orally to consult the friend to whom he had referred me, as being personally cognisant of the alleged fact—the only witness, indeed, of the scene described. The answer was that he had heard the story before, but that nothing of the kind had ever happened. The asserted incident was one, as I ventured to tell the man who had described it to me at the time, that did not cast additional lustre on his reputation; and it would have been obvious, even if he had rejoiced in a less unblemished reputation, that it was not for self-glorification, but in obedience to an irrepressible desire to declare the truth, that he told me what afterwards appeared to be not an accomplished fact, but an intention unfulfilled. Experiences of this kind render the historical inquirer very sceptical even of information supposed to be on “the best possible authority.” Truly, it is very disheartening to find that the nearer one approaches the fountain-head of truth, the further off we may find ourselves from it.*

* It may be mentioned here (though not directly in confirmation of the above) as a curious illustration of the difficulty of discerning between truth and error, that the only statement seriously im-

pugned in a former work of history by the author of this book, was the only one which he had made as the result of his own personal knowledge—the only fact which he had witnessed with his own eyes.

HISTORY OF THE SEPOY WAR:

BOOK IV.—THE RISING IN THE NORTH-WEST.

[May, 1857.]

CHAPTER I.

IMPORTANCE OF THE SEIZURE OF DELHI—MORAL INFLUENCES—POSITION OF THE DELHI FAMILY—EARLY HISTORY—SUCCESSIVE DEGRADATIONS—THE QUESTION OF SUCCESSION—INTRIGUES OF ZEEMOT MEHAL—DEATH OF PRINCE FAKIR-OD-DOWLAH—RENEWED INTRIGUES—VIEWS OF LORD CANNING—STATE OF MAHOMEDAN FEELING AT DELHI—THE NATIVE PRESS—CORRESPONDENCE WITH PERMIA—THE PROCLAMATION—TEMPER OF THE SOLDIERY.

It was a work of time at Calcutta to elicit all the details of the sad story briefly outlined in the preceding chapter. But the great fact was patent to Lord Canning that the English had been driven out of Delhi, and that, for a time, in that great centre of Mahomedanism, the dynasty of the Mogul Family was restored. The tremendous political significance of this revolution could not be misunderstood by the most obtuse, or glossed over by the most sanguine. The Emperors of Delhi had long ceased to exercise any substantial authority over the people whom they

Lord Canning and the Delhi Question.

1804—57. had once governed. For fifty years the Master of the Delhi Palace had been, in the estimation of the English, merely a pageant and a show. But the pageantry, the show, the name, had never ceased to be living influences in the minds of the princes and people of India. Up to a comparatively recent period all the coin of India had borne the superscription of the Mogul; and the chiefs of India, whether Mahomedan or Hindoo, had still continued to regard the sanction given to their successions by that shadow of royalty, as something more assuring than any recognition which could come from the substance of the British Government. If the Empire of Delhi had passed into a tradition, the tradition was still an honoured one. It had sunk deeply into the memories of the people.

Doubtful, before, of the strength of these influences, Lord Canning now began to suspect that he had been misinformed. In the preceding year, he had mastered the whole Delhi history, and he knew full well the peculiar circumstances which at that period made it so perilous that the Imperial Family should be appealed to in aid of the national cause. He saw before him, in all their length and breadth, the incidents of family intrigue, which imparted a vigorous individuality to the hostility of the Mogul. He knew that the chief inmates of the palace had never been in a mood of mind so little likely to resist the temptations now offered to them. He knew that the old King himself, and his favourite wife who ruled him, had been for some time cherishing animosities and resentments, which rendered it but too likely that on the first encouraging occasion they would break into open hostility against the usurping Englishman, who had vaulted into the seat of the Mogul, reduced him

to a suppliant, and thwarted him in all the most cherished wishes of his heart. 1804—57.

With as much brevity as may suffice to make the position clear, the Delhi story must be told. The old King, Behaudur Shah, whose sovereignty had been proclaimed, was the second in descent from the Emperor Shah Allum, whom, blind, helpless, and miserable, the English had rescued from the gripe of the Mahrattas,* when at the dawn of the nineteenth century the armies of Lake and Wellesley broke up their powerful confederacy, and scattered the last hopes of the French. Shah Allum was the great-grandson of Aurungzebe, the tenth successor in a direct line from Timour, the great founder of the dynasty of the Moguls. Even in the depths of his misery and humiliation, he was regarded by the most magnificent of English viceroys as a mighty potentate, whom it was a privilege to protect, and sacrilege to think of supplanting. The "great game" of Lord Wellesley embraced nothing so stupendous as the usurpation of the Imperial throne. Perhaps it was, as his brother Arthur and John Malcolm declared, and as younger men suspected and hinted, that the Governor-General, worn out by the oppositions and restrictions of the Leadenhall-street Government, and broken in health by the climate of Calcutta, had lost his old daring and cast aside his pristine ambition. Perhaps it was believed by him and by his associates in the Council

The Delhi story—Shah Allum.

1804.

* Lord Lake's first interview with him is thus officially described in the records of the day: "In the magnificent palace built by Shah Jehan the Commander-in-Chief was ushered into the royal presence, and found the unfortunate and venerable Im-

peror, oppressed by the accumulated calamities of old age and degraded authority, extreme poverty and loss of sight, seated under a small tattered canopy, the remnant of his royal state, with every external appearance of the misery of his condition."

1804—5. Chamber that it would be sounder policy, tending more to our own grandeur in the end, to gather gradual strength from this protective connexion with the Emperor, before endeavouring to walk in the pleasant paths of imperialism. But in either case, he recoiled from the thought of its being suspected in England, that he wished to place the East India Company, substantively or vicariously, on the throne of the Moguls. "It has never," he wrote to the Secret Committee of the Court of Directors, June 2, 1805, "been in the contemplation of this Government to derive from the charge of protecting and supporting his Majesty the privilege of employing the Royal Prerogative as an instrument of establishing any control or ascendancy over the States and Chieftains of India, or of asserting on the part of his Majesty any of the claims which, in his capacity of Emperor of Hindostan, his Majesty may be considered to possess upon the provinces originally composing the Mogul Empire. The benefits which the Governor-General in Council expected to derive from placing the King of Delhi and the Royal Family under the protection of the British Government, are to be traced in the statement contained in our despatch to your Honourable Committee of the 13th of July, 1804,* relative to the evils and embarrassments to which the British power might have been exposed by the prosecution of claims and pretensions

* The objects are thus enumerated in the despatch to which reference is made: "The deliverance of the Emperor Shah Allum from the control of the French power established in the North-West quarter of Hindostan, by which the Government of France has been deprived of a powerful instrument in the eventual prosecution of its hostile designs against the British Government in

India, and the British Government has obtained a favourable opportunity of conciliating the confidence and securing the applause of surrounding states by providing a safe and tranquil asylum for the declining age of that venerable and unfortunate monarch, and a suitable maintenance for his numerous and distressed family."—July 13, 1804.

on the part of the Mahrattas, or of the French, in the name and, under the authority of his Majesty Shah Allum, if the person and family of that unhappy monarch had continued under the custody and control of those powers, and especially of the French."

It must have taxed the ingenuity of Lord Wellesley, even with the experienced guidance and assistance of Sir George Barlow and Mr. Edmonstone, to design a scheme for the continuance or restoration of the Empire on a small scale—a scheme whereby Shah Allum might become more than a pensioner, a pageant, and a puppet, and yet less than the substance of a sovereign. He was to be a King and yet no King—a something and yet nothing—a reality and a sham at the same time. It was a solace to us, in the "great game," to know that we "held the King;" but it was a puzzle to us how to play the card. It was, indeed, a great political paradox, which Lord Wellesley's Government was called upon to institute; and he did the best that could be done, in the circumstances in which he was placed, to reconcile not only the House of Timour, but the people who still clung reverentially to the great Mahomedan dynasty, to the state of things which had arisen out of those circumstances. It was determined that a certain amount of that dignity, which is derived from territorial dominion, should still be attached to the person of the Emperor; that within certain limits he should still be the fountain of justice; and that (negatively) within those limits the power of life or death should be in his hands. And in addition to the revenues of the districts thus reserved as an appanage of the Throne, he and his family were to receive stipendiary allowances amounting to more than a hundred thousand pounds a year.

1804—5.

Thus the Emperor of all the Indies—the Great Mogul, traditionally the grandest sovereign in the Universe—became, whilst still indued with the purple and the gold of imperial state, and rejoicing in the appearance of territorial dominion, virtually a pensioner of a Company of Merchants. The situation was one which conferred many advantages on the British Government in India, but it was not without its dangers. Even in the depths of his misery and degradation, the King's name was a pillar of strength; the rags of royalty were revered by the people. And Lord Wellesley saw clearly that if the ancestral State of the Mogul were perpetuated—if he were left to reside in the Palace of Shah Jehan, with all the accompaniments of his former grandeur around him, in the midst of a Mahomedan population still loyal to the House of Timour—there might some day be an attempt to reconstruct the ruined monarchy in the person of one of Shah Allum's successors, which might cause us grievous annoyance. So it was proposed that Monghyr should become the residence of the Imperial Family. But the old King shuddered at the thought of removal, and the shudder ran through his family, from the oldest to the youngest, male and female, relatives and dependants. Not, therefore, to inflict any further pain or humiliation upon them, Lord Wellesley consented that they should abide in the Delhi Palace. At some future time their removal might be effected without any cruel divulsions, any of those strainings and crackings of the heart-strings, which must attend the exodus of Princes born in the purple, with the memory of actual sovereignty still fresh within them.

1806.
Akbar Shah.

In December, 1806, Shah Allum died, and was succeeded by his son, Akbar Shah. It happened that

1806.

the English officer, who at that time represented the British Government at Delhi, was a courtier of the old school, whose inveterate politeness of speech and manner had ample scope for exercise at the ex-imperial Court. Mr. Seton would have died rather than hurt the feelings of the humblest denizen of the Palace. In the caricatures of the period he was represented saluting Satan with a low bow, and hoping that his Majesty was well and prosperous. Associated, at this time, in a subordinate capacity with Mr. Seton, but much trusted, and consulted by him with the deference shown to an equal in age and position, was young Charles Metcalfe, who, although little more than a boy, saw clearly the store of future trouble which the British Government was laying up for itself by not curbing the pretensions of the now effete Mogul. "I do not conform," he wrote, "to the policy of Seton's mode of managing the Royal Family. It is by a submission of manner and conduct, carried on, in my opinion, far beyond the respect and attention which can be either prescribed by forms or dictated by a humane consideration for the fallen fortunes of a once illustrious family. It destroys entirely the dignity which ought to be attached to him who represents the British Government, and who in reality is to govern at Delhi; and it raises (I have perceived the effect disclosing itself with rapidity) ideas of imperial power and away which ought to be put to sleep for ever. As it is evident that we do not mean to restore imperial power to the King, we ought not to pursue a conduct calculated to make him aspire to it. Let us treat him with the respect due to his situation; let us make him comfortable in respect to circumstances, and give him all the means, as far as possible, of

1806—37. being happy ; but, unless we mean to re-establish his power, let us not encourage him to dream of it." No grey-haired politician could have written anything wiser than this ; and when, after the lapse of a few years, the writer himself became "Resident" at Delhi, and had the supreme direction of affairs, all his boyish impressions were confirmed. He was brought face to face with a state of things offensive alike to reason and to humanity ; but neither he nor his successors in the Residency could do more than recommend one measure after another which might gradually mitigate the evils which stood out so obtrusively before them.

Time passed ; and the English in India, secure in their great possessions, dreading no external enemy, and feeling strong within them the power to tread down any danger which might arise on Indian soil, advanced with a firmer step and a bolder presence. They no longer recoiled from the thought of Empire. What had appeared at the commencement of the century to be perilous presumption, now seemed to be merely the inevitable accident of our position. The "great game" had been imperfectly played out in Lord Wellesley's time ; and ten years afterwards Lord Hastings saw before him the results of that settlement where nothing was settled, and resolved to assert the supremacy of the British Government over all the potentates of India. Times were changed both at home and abroad, and our feelings had changed with them. The Company had not quite forgotten that it had been established on a "pure mercantile bottom." But the successes of our arms in Europe had given us confidence in ourselves as a great military nation ; and, though the Directors in Leadenhall-street, true to their old traditions, might

1806—37.

still array themselves against all projects for the extension of our military and political power in the East, it was felt that the people of England would applaud the bolder policy, if it were only successful. From that time England became arbiter of the fate of all the princes of India. There was no longer any reluctance to assert our position as the paramount power. It was a necessary part of the scheme then to put down the fiction of the Delhi Empire. The word Empire was, thenceforth, to be associated only with the British power in the East; and the mock-majesty, which we had once thought it serviceable to us to maintain, was now, as soon as possible, to be dismissed as inconvenient lumber.

It might be narrated how, during a period of thirty years, the sun of royalty, little by little, was shorn of its beams—how first one Governor-General and then another resisted the proud pretensions of the Mogul, and lopped off some of the ceremonial obeisances which had so long maintained the inflated dignity of the House of Timour.* All these humiliations rankled in the minds of the inmates of the Palace; but they were among the necessities of the continually advancing supremacy of the English. It may be questioned whether a single man, to whose opinion any weight of authority can fairly be attached, has ever doubted the wisdom of these excisions. And humanity might well pause to consider whether more might not yet be done to mitigate that great evil of rotting royalty which had so long polluted the atmosphere of Delhi. That gigantic Palace, almost a city in itself, had long been the

* It was not until 1835, that the current coin of India ceased to bear the superscription of the Mogul emperors, and the "Company's rupee" was substituted for it.

1806—37. home of manifold abominations; and a Christian Government had suffered, and was still suffering, generation after generation of abandoned men and degraded women, born in that vast sty of refuge, to be a curse to others and to themselves. In subdued official language, it was said of these wretched members of a Royal House, that they were “independent of all law, immersed in idleness and profligacy, and indifferent to public opinion.”* It might have been said, without a transgression of the truth, that the recesses of the Palace were familiar with the commission of every crime known in the East, and that Heaven alone could take account of that tremendous catalogue of iniquities.

1837. On the evening of the 28th of September, 1837,
 dur Akbar Shah died, at the age of eighty-two. He had intrigued some years before to set aside the succession of the Heir-Apparent in behalf of a favourite son; but he had failed.† And now Prince Aboo Zuffer, in the official language of the day, “ascended the throne, assuming the title of Abool Mozuffer Surajoodeen Mahomed Behaudur Shah Padshah-i-Gazee.” It is sufficient that he should be known here by the name of Behaudur Shah. He was then far advanced in age; but he was of a long-lived family, and his three-score years had not pressed heavily upon him. He was supposed to be a quiet, inert man, fond of poetry, a poetaster himself; and not at all addicted, by nature, to political intrigue. If he had any prominent characteristic it was avarice. He had not long succeeded to the title

* Sometimes, however, great crimes were punished. Prince Ily-dur Shah, for example, was executed for the murder of his wife.

† Indeed, he had made two sepa-

rate efforts, in favour first of one son, then of another. The first endeavour was attended with some eventful circumstances which might have led to violence and bloodshed.

before he began to press for an addition royal stipend, which had in some sort been promised to Akbar Shah. The Lieutenant-Governor was unwilling to recommend such a waste of the public money; but the Governor-General, equally believing it to be wasteful, said that, although as a new question he would have negatived it, the promise having been given it ought to be fulfilled—but upon the original conditions. These conditions were, that the King should execute a formal renunciation of all further claims upon the British Government; but Behaudur Shah did as his father had done before him. He refused to subscribe to the proposed conditions, and continued to cherish a belief that, by sending an agent to England, he might obtain what he sought without any embarrassing restrictions.

Akbar Shah had employed as his representative the celebrated Brahmin, Rammohun Roy, and ever still regarding himself as the fountain of honour, had conferred on his envoy the title of Rajah. English society recognised it, as it would have recognised a still higher title, assumed by a Khitnudgar; but the authorities refused their official recognition to the Rajahship, though they paid becoming respect to the character of the man, who was striving to enlighten the Gentiles, as a social and religious reformer. As the envoy of the Mogul he accomplished nothing; and Behaudur Shah found that the "case" was much in the same state as it had been when Rammohun Roy left India on the business of the late King. But he had still faith in the efficacy of a mission to England, especially if conducted by an Englishman. So when he heard that an eloquent lecturer, who had gained a great reputation in the Western world by his earnest advocacy of the rights

Lord
land.

Rammohun
Roy.

George
Thompson.

coloured races, had come to India, Behaudur Shah invited him to Delhi, and was eager to enlist his services. He had many supposed wrongs to be redressed. Lord Ellenborough had given the finishing stroke to the system of nuzzur-giving, or tributary present-making, to the King, by prohibiting even such offerings by the Resident.* Thus had passed away almost the last vestige of that recognition, by the British Government, of the imperial dignity of the House of Timour; and although money-compensation had been freely given for the loss, the change rankled in the mind of the King. But the Company had already refused to grant any increase of stipend to the Royal Family until the prescribed conditions had been accepted;† and Mr. George Thompson had no more power than Rammohun Roy to cause a relaxation of the decision. And in truth, there was no sufficient reason why the stipend should be increased. A lakh of rupees a month was sufficient, on a broad basis of generosity, even for that multitudinous family; and it would have been profligate to throw away more money on the mock-royalty of Delhi, when it might be so much better bestowed.‡

There was, indeed, no ground of complaint against

* Nuzzurs had formerly been presented by the Governor-General and the Commander-in-Chief—by the latter, it would seem, as recently as 1837, on the accession of Shah Behaudur.—See Letter of the Government of India, May 23, 1838. And in the cold season of 1842-3 Lord Ellenborough's secretaries presented nuzzurs to the King, without any intimation to the Governor-General; who, on learning what they had done, was surprised and indignant in the extreme, and put a stop to the nuzzur-giving for ever. Mr. William Edwards, one of the secretaries concerned, has given an interesting

account of the affair, which will be found in the Appendix.

† Letter of the Court of Directors, Feb. 11, 1846: "It being impossible for us to waive this condition (of executing a formal renunciation of all further claims) the King must be considered as having declined the offered benefit."

‡ In addition to this monthly lakh of rupees, paid in money, Behaudur Shah continued to enjoy the proceeds of some crown lands, and also of some ground-rents in the city.—See evidence of Mr. Sanders at the King's trial: "He was in receipt of a stipend of one lakh of rupees per

the British Government; and, perhaps, the King would have subsided into a state, if not of absolute content, of submissive quietude, if it had not been for that activity of Zenana intrigue, which no Oriental sovereign, with nothing to do but to live, can ever hope to resist. He had married a young wife, who had borne him a son, and who had become a favourite, potential for good or evil. As often it has happened, from the time of the patriarchs downwards, this son of his old age also became a favourite; and the King was easily wrought upon by Queen Zeemut Mehal to endeavour to set aside the succession of the heir-apparent in favour of the boy-prince. The unjust supercession, which his father had endeavoured to perpetrate against him, might now some day be put in force by himself, for the gratification of his favourite. But it was necessary in such a case to walk warily. Any rash hasty action might be followed by a failure which could never be repaired. In any case, it would be better to wait until the child, Jewan Bukht, were a few years older, and he could be extolled as a youth of promise. Meanwhile the great Chapter of Accidents might contain something in their favour. So hanging on to the skirts of Circumstance, he watched for the coming of an opportunity. And ere long the opportunity came—bringing with it more than had been looked for, and not all to the satisfaction of the royal expectants.

The story may be briefly told. In 1849, Prince The story of the success-
 mensom, of which ninety-nine thousand were paid at Delhi, and one thousand at Lucknow, to the members of the family there. He was also in receipt of revenue to the amount of a lakh and a half from the crown lands in the neighbourhood of Delhi. He also received a considerable sum from the ground-rents of houses and tenants in the city of Delhi."

1849.

Dara Bukht, the Heir-Apparent, died. At this time the King, Behaudur Shah, had numbered more than seventy years. In natural course his death could be no very remote contingency. The question of succession, therefore, pressed heavily on the mind of the Governor-General. Lord Dalhousie was not a man to regard with much favour the mock sovereignty of the Mogul. Others before him, with greater tenderness for ancient dynastic traditions, had groaned over the long continuance of a state of things at which reason and truth revolted; and the extinction of the titular dignity of the Kings of Delhi, after the death of Behaudur Shah, had been urged upon the Government of the East India Company.* But the proposal stirred up divisions in the Council-Chamber of Leadenhall, which resulted in delayed action. The usual expedient of waiting for further advices from India was resorted to, and so Lord Dalhousie found the question unsettled. The death of Prince Dara Bukht afforded an opportunity for its settlement, which a Governor-General of Dalhousie's temperament was not likely to neglect. The next in succession, according to Mahomedan law, was Prince Fakir-ood-deen, a man thirty years of age, reputed to be of quick parts, fond of European society, and tolerant of the British Government. And the Governor-General saw both in the character of the man and the circumstances of his position that which might favour and

* Writing on the 1st of August, 1844, the Court of Directors observed: "The Governor-General has given directions to the Agent that, in the event of the demise of the King of Delhi, no step whatever shall be taken which can be construed into a recognition of the descent of that title to a successor with-

out specific authority from the Governor-General. If in these instructions the abolition of the title is contemplated, we cannot give it our sanction until we have heard further from you on the subject, and have had time to consider the purport and the grounds of the recommendation which may be offered."

facilitate the changes which he wisely desired to introduce. 1849.

It was manifestly the duty of the British Government not to perpetuate a state of things which had nothing but tradition to gloss over its offensive deformity. But the operation that had become necessary was not one to be performed violently and abruptly, without regard to times and seasons. Feeling sure that the opportunity could not be far distant, Lord Dalhousie had been contented to wait. It had now come. Prince Dara Bukht was the last of the Delhi Princes who had been "born in the purple." He had been reared and he had ripened in the expectation of succeeding to the Kingship of Delhi; and there might have been some hardship, if not a constructive breach of faith, in destroying the hopes of a lifetime at the very point of fruition. But Prince Fakirood-deen had been born a pensioner. He had no recollection of "the time when the King of Delhi still sat on the throne and was recognised as the paramount potentate in India." It could, therefore, be no injustice to him to admit his accession to the chiefship of the family upon other conditions than those which had been recognised in the case of his father; whilst it was, in the opinion of the Governor-General, sound policy, on the other hand, to sweep away all the privileges and prerogatives which had kept alive this great pretentious mock-royalty in the heart of our Empire.

Lord
Dalhousie's
measures.

The evils to be removed were many; but two among them were more glaring than the rest. The perpetuation of the kingly title was a great sore. Lord Dalhousie did not overrate its magnitude. Perhaps, indeed, he scarcely took in its true proportions. For he wrote that the Princes of India and

1849. its people, whatever they might once have been, had become "entirely indifferent to the condition of the King or his position."* And he added: "The British Government has become indeed and in truth the paramount Sovereign in India. It is not expedient that there should be, even in name, a rival in the person of a Sovereign whose ancestors once held the paramountcy we now possess. His existence could never really endanger us, I admit; although the intrigues of which he might, and not unfrequently has been made the nucleus, might incommode and vex us." I have said before that Lord Dalhousie "could not understand the tenacity with which the natives of India cling to their old traditions—could not sympathise with the veneration which they felt for their ancient dynasties."† Time might have weakened the veneration felt for the House of Delhi, but had not, assuredly, effaced it. There was still sufficient vitality in it to engender, under favouring circumstances, something more than discomfort and vexation. But Lord Dalhousie erred only in thus under-estimating the proportions of the evil which he now desired to remove. He was not, on that account, less impressed with the fact that it would be grievous impolicy on the part of the British Government to suffer the kingly title, on the death of Behaudur Shah, to pass to another generation.

The other evil thing of which I have spoken was the maintenance of the Palace as a royal residence. Regarded in the aspect of morality and humanity, as already observed, it was an abomination of the worst kind. But, more clearly even than this, Lord Dalhousie discerned the political and military disadvantages of the existing state of things, by

* Minutes, February 10, 1849.

† *Ibid.*, vol. I. p. 356.

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which, what was in reality a great fortress in the hands of a possible enemy, was suffered to command the chief arsenal of Upper India. "Here," wrote the Governor-General, "we have a strong fortress in the heart of one of the principal cities of our Empire, and in entire command of the chief magazine of the Upper Provinces—which lies so exposed, both to assault and to the dangers arising from the carelessness of the people dwelling around it—that it is a matter of surprise that no accident has yet occurred to it. Its dangerous position has been frequently remarked upon, and many schemes have been prepared for its improvement and defence; but the only eligible one is the transfer of the stores into the Palace, which would then be kept by us as a British post, capable of maintaining itself against any hostile manœuvre, instead of being, as it now is, the source of positive danger, and perhaps not unfrequently the focus of intrigues against our power."*

There was undoubted wisdom in this. To remove

* It does not appear, however, that Lord Dalhousie laid any stress upon the fact that no European troops were posted in Delhi. Nor, indeed, did Sir Charles Napier, who at this time was Commander-in-Chief of the British army in India. He saw clearly that the military situation was a false one, and he wrote much about the defence of the city, but without drawing any distinction between European and Native troops. In both cases the anticipated danger was from a rising of the people, not of the soldiery. With respect to the situation of the magazine, Sir Charles Napier wrote to the Governor-General (Lahore, Dec. 15, 1849), saying: "As regards the magazine, the objections to it are as follows: 1st. It is placed in a very populous part of the city, and its explosion would be very horrible in

its effects as regards the destruction of life. 2nd. It would destroy the magnificent palace of Delhi. 3rd. The loss of Government property would also be very great, especially if my views of the importance of Delhi, given in my report, be acted upon; namely, that it and Dinapore should be two great magazines for the Bengal Presidency. 4th. It is without defence beyond what the guard of fifty men offer, and its gates are so weak that a mob could push them in. I therefore think a powder magazine should be built in a safe place. There is a strong castle three or four miles from the town which would answer well, but I fear the repairs would be too expensive; more so, perhaps, than what would be more efficacious, viz., to build a magazine in a suitable position near the city."

1849. the Delhi Family from the Palace, and to abolish all their Alsatian privileges, upon the death of Behaudur Shah, could have been no very difficult work. But to Lord Dalhousie it appeared that this part of the duty which lay before him should be accomplished with the least possible delay. He conceived that there would be no necessity to wait for the demise of the titular sovereign, as in all probability the King might be persuaded to vacate the Palace, if sufficient inducement were held out to him. He argued that, as the Kings of Delhi had possessed a convenient and favourite country residence at the Kootab, some twelve miles to the south of Delhi, and that as the place was held in great veneration, generally and particularly, as the burial-place of a noted Mahomedan saint and of some of the ancestors of Behaudur Shah, his Majesty and the Royal Family were not likely to object to their removal, and, if they did object, it was to be considered whether pressure might not be put upon them, and their consent obtained by the extreme measure of withholding the royal stipend. But the representative of a long line of Kings might not unreasonably have demurred to the expulsion of his Family from the old home of his fathers, and it demanded no great exercise of imagination to comprehend the position.

Views of the
Government.

When this exposition of Lord Dalhousie's views was laid before the Court of Directors of the East India Company, the subject was debated with much interest in Leadenhall-street.* Already had the strong mind of the Governor-General begun to influence the councils of the Home Government of India. There were one or two able and active members of

* Sir Archibald Galloway, who had taken part in the defence of Delhi at the commencement of the century, was Chairman of the East India Company.

1849.

the Court who believed implicitly in him, and were resolute to support everything that he did. There was another section of the Court, which had no special faith in Lord Dalhousie, but which, upon system, supported the action of the local Governments, as the least troublesome means of disposing of difficult questions. But there was a third and powerful party—powerful in intellect, more powerful still in its unflinching honesty and candour, and its inalienable sense of justice—and this party prevailed. The result was that the majority agreed to despatch instructions to India, negating the proposals of the Governor-General. But when the draft went from Leadenhall-street to Cannon-row, it met with determined opposition from the Board of Control, over which at that time Sir John Hobhouse presided.* It was contended that the British Government were not pledged to continue to Shah Allum's successors the privileges accorded to him, and that the Court had not proved that the proposals of the Governor-General were either unjust or impolitic. Then arose one of those sharp conflicts between the Court and the Board which in the old days of the Double Government sometimes broke in upon the monotony of their Councils. The Court rejoined that the proposals were those of the Governor-General alone, that the concurrence of his Council had not been obtained, that the contemplated measures were ungenerous and unwise,† and that it would give grievous offence to the

Conflict between the Court and the Board.

* Mr. James Wilson and the Hon. John Eliot were then Secretaries to the Board.

† "The question," they said, "is not one of supremacy. The supremacy of the British power is beyond

dispute. The sovereignty of Delhi is a title utterly powerless for injury, but respected by Mahomedans as an ancient honour of their name, and their good feelings are consulted to the British Government by

1849. Mahomedan population of the country. They were prepared to sanction persuasive means to obtain the evacuation of the Palace, but they most strongly objected to compulsion. The Board then replied that it was not necessary in such a case to obtain the consent of the Members of Council, and that if they had felt any alarm as to the results of the proposed measure, they would have communicated their apprehensions to the Court (which, however, was a mistaken impression)—that there was no sort of obligation to continue to the successors of Shah Allum what Lord Wellesley had granted to him—that it was a question only of policy, and that as to the effect of the proposed measure on the minds of the Mahomedans, the local ruler was a better judge than the Directors at home (and this, perhaps, was another mistake); but when the Indian minister added: "The chance of danger to the British Empire from the head of the House of Timour may be infinitely small; but if a Mahomedan should ever think that he required such a rallying-point for the purpose of infusing into those of his own faith spirit and bitterness in an attack on Christian supremacy, he would surely find that a Prince already endowed with the regal title, and possessed of a royal residence, was a more efficient instrument in his hands than one placed in the less conspicuous position contemplated by Lord Dalhousie and his advisers," he spoke wisely and presciently. On receipt of this letter, the Court again

the respect it shows for that ancient honour. The entire indifference of the Princes and the people of India to the condition or position of the King is alleged; but the Court cannot think it possible that any people can ever become indifferent to the memory of its former greatness. The traditional reverence with which

that memory is regarded is altogether distinct from any hopes of its renewal. But it is a feeling which it is impolitic to wound. From mere hopelessness of resistance it may not immediately show itself, but may remain latent till other causes of public danger may bring it into action."

1849.

returned to the conflict, urging that they felt so deeply the importance of the subject that they could not refrain from making a further appeal to the Board. They combated what had been said about the implied concurrence of the Council, and the argument against the claims of the Delhi Family based upon the action of Lord Wellesley, and then they proceeded to speak again of the feelings of the Mahomedan population. "The amount of disaffection," they said, "in the Mahomedan population, which the particular measure, if carried into effect, may produce, is a matter of opinion on which the means do not exist of pronouncing confidently. The evil may prove less than the Court apprehend, or it may be far greater than they would venture to predict. But of this they are convinced, that even on the most favourable supposition, the measure would be considered throughout India as evidence of the commencement of a great change in our policy." "The Court," it was added, "cannot contemplate without serious uneasiness the consequences which may arise from such an impression, should it go forth generally throughout India—firmly believing that such an act would produce a distrust which many years of an opposite policy would be insufficient to remove." Then, having again entreated most earnestly the Board's reconsideration of their decision, they concluded by saying, that if they failed, they would "still have discharged their duty to themselves, by disclaiming all responsibility for a measure which they regarded as unjust towards the individual family, gratuitously offensive to an important portion of our Indian subjects, and calculated to produce an effect on the reputation and influence of the British Government both in India and elsewhere, such as

1849. they would deeply deplore." But the last appeal fell on stony ground. The Board were obdurate. They deplored the difference of opinion, accepted the disclaimer, and, on the last day of the year, directed, "according to the powers vested in them by the law," a despatch to be sent to India in the form settled by the Board. So instructions were sent out to India, signed ministerially by certain members of the Court, totally opposed to what, as a body, they believed to be consistent with policy and justice.

December 31,
1849.

Summary
of the
incident.

On full consideration of this correspondence, conducted as it was, on both sides, with no common ability, it is difficult to resist the conviction that both were right and both were wrong: right in what they asserted, wrong in what they denied. It was, in truth, but a choice of evils that lay before the double Government; but each half of it erred in denying the existence of the dangers asserted by the other. Much, of course, on both sides was conjecture or speculation, to be tested by the great touchstone of the Future; and it depended on the more rapid or the more tardy ripening of events on the one side or the other to demonstrate the greater sagacity of the Court or the Board. If there should be no popular excitement before the death of Behaudur Shah, to make the King of Delhi, in his great palatial stronghold, a rallying-point for a disaffected people, that event, followed by the abolition of the title and the removal of the Family from the Palace, might prove the soundness of the Court's arguments, by evoking a Mahomedan outbreak; but, if there should be a Mahomedan, or any other popular outbreak, during the lifetime of Behaudur Shah, it might be shown, by the alacrity of the people to rally round the old imperial throne, and to proclaim again the sovereignty of the House

of Timour, that the apprehensions of the Board had not been misplaced, and that the danger on which they had enlarged was a real one. There was equal force at the time in the arguments of both, but there was that in the womb of the Future which was destined to give the victory to the Board.

1849.

Lord Dalhousie received the instructions bearing the official signatures of the Court in the early spring of 1850;* but he had before learnt in what a hot-bed of contention the despatch was being reared, and when it came, he wisely hesitated to act upon its contents. It is to his honour that, on full consideration, he deferred to the opinions expressed by the majority of the Court, and by others not in the Court, whose opinions were entitled to equal respect. "The Honourable Court," he said, "have conveyed to the Governor-General in Council full authority to carry these measures into effect. But I have, for some time past, been made aware through different channels, that the measures I have thus proposed regard-

1850.

Measures deferred.

* Some powerful protests were recorded by members of the Court ---among others by Mr. Tucker, then nearly eighty years of age. In this paper he said: "That they (the Delhi family) can be induced voluntarily to abandon their palace, I cannot, for one moment, believe. The attachment of the natives generally to the seats of their ancestors, however humble, is well known to all those who know anything of the people of India; but in this case there are peculiar circumstances, the cherished associations of glory, the memory of past grandeur, which must render the palace of Delhi the object of attachment and veneration to the fallen family. . . . If the object is to be accomplished, it must be by the exertion of military force, or intimidation disgraceful to any Government, and calculated to bring odium

on the British name." "I have the highest respect," he said, "for the talents, the great acquirements, and the public spirit of Lord Dalhousie; but I must think that an individual, who has only communicated with the people of India through an interpreter, cannot have acquired a very intimate knowledge of the character, habits, feelings, and prejudices of the people." "The veteran director erred, however, in making light of the strength of Delhi as a fortified city. "It is not," he said, "a fortress of any strength. . . . It has been repeatedly entered and sacked by undisciplined hordes." "There is, in fact," he continued, "no ground for assuming that Delhi can become a military post of importance, especially now that we have advanced our frontier to the banks of the Indus."

1500. ing the throne of Delhi, have not met with the concurrence of authorities in England whose long experience and knowledge of Indian affairs entitle their opinions to great weight, and that many there regard the tendency of these proposed measures with anxiety, if not with alarm." He added that, with unfeigned deference to the opinions thus expressed, he still held the same views as before; but that, although his convictions remained as strong as ever, he did not consider the measures themselves to be of such immediate urgency as to justify his carrying them into effect, "contrary to declared opinions of undoubted weight and authority, or in a manner calculated to create uneasiness and doubt." He was willing, therefore, to suspend action, and, in the meanwhile, to invite the opinions of his Council, which had not been before recorded.

Palace
intrigue.

Whilst the main questions thus indicated were under consideration, another difficulty of a personal character arose. The King protested against the succession of Fakir-ood-deen. Stimulated by his favourite wife, Zeenut-Mehal, he pleaded earnestly for her son, then a boy of eleven. One objection which he raised to the succession of his eldest surviving son was a curious one. He said that it was a tradition of his House, since the time of Timour, that no one was to sit on the throne who had been in any way mutilated; Fakir-ood-deen had been circumcised, and, therefore, he was disqualified.* The objection was

* The statement was an exaggerated one: as all the Mogul Emperors, up to the time of Humayun, were circumcised. After the accession of this prince, for reasons given in a very interesting note, at the end of the volume, furnished by

my learned friend, Moulavee Syud Ahmed, C.S.I., the rite was discontinued, generally, in the family. But for certain physical reasons, an exception was made, with respect to Fakir-ood-deen, and Zeenut-Mehal aliezed upon the pretext.

1850.

urged with much vehemence, and, it was added, that Fakir-ood-deen was a man of bad character. The immediate effect of these representations was that Lord Dalhousie determined for a while to suspend official action with respect to the question of succession, and to see what circumstances might develop in his favour.

In the mean time he invited the opinions of his colleagues in the Supreme Council. It consisted, at that time, of Sir Frederick Currie, Sir John Littler, an old Company's officer of good repute, and Mr. John Lewis, a Bengal civilian, blameless in all official and personal relations, one of the lights of the Service, steady but not brilliant. The first shrewdly observed that we might leave the choice of a successor until the King's death, which could not be very remote, and that we might then easily make terms with, or impose conditions upon, the accepted candidate, for the evacuation of the Palace. The General looked doubtfully at the whole proposal. He believed that the Mahomedan population of India still regarded with reverence the old Mogul Family, and would be incensed by its humiliation. He counselled, therefore, caution and delay, and in the end persuasion, not compulsion. But John Lewis laughed all this to scorn. He did not believe that the Mahomedans of India cared anything about Delhi, or anything about the King; and if they did care, that, he said, was an additional reason why the title should be abolished, and the Palace vacated, with the least possible delay.*

Opinions of
the Council.

* "But, if these fears are not groundless, surely they afford a positive reason for taking the proposed step, because the result anticipated, as it appears to me, can arise only if the Mahomedans (no doubt the most restless and discontented of our subjects) have continued to look upon the representatives of the House of Timour as their natural head, and to

1850. The result of these deliberations was that a despatch was sent to England, recommending that affairs should remain unchanged during the lifetime of the present King—that the Prince Fakir-ood-deen should be acknowledged as successor to the royal title, but that advantage should be taken of the pretensions of a rival claimant to the titular dignity, to obtain the desired concessions from the acknowledged Head of the Family—that inducements should be held out to him to leave the Palace and to reside in the Kootab, and that, if necessary, this advantage should be purchased by the grant of an additional stipend.

Agreement
with the
Government.
apparent.

To all the recommendations of the Governor-General—so far as they concern this history—the Home Government yielded their consent. Permission was then granted to the Delhi Agent to make known to Prince Fakir-ood-deen, at a confidential interview, what were the intentions and wishes of the British Government. A meeting, therefore, took place between the Prince and Sir Thomas Metcalfe; and the former expressed himself, according to official reports, prepared to accede to the wishes of the Government, “if invested with the title of King, and permitted to assume the externals of royalty.” An agreement was then drawn up, signed, sealed, and witnessed, and the work was done. It was, doubtless, pleasant to the authorities to think that the heir had acceded willingly to all the demands made upon him. But the fact is that he consented to them with intense disgust, and that throughout the Palace there were great consternation and excitement, and that no one

count upon the Palace of Delhi as a rallying point in the event of any outbreak amongst them. If it be so, it is surely sound policy, on the first favourable opportunity, to remove the head, and to put the projected rallying point into safe hands.”

was more vexed than the mother of the rival claimant, 1850.
Queen Zeenut-Mehal.

I must pass hastily over the next two or three 1856.
years, during which the animosities of the Queen Death of
Zeenut-Mehal, and of her son, Jewan Bakht, con- Fakir-ood-
tinued to fester under the irritations of a great dis- deen.
appointment. And ere long they were aggravated by
the thought of a new grievance; for the King had
endeavoured in vain to induce the British Govern-
ment to pledge itself to make to his favourites, after
his death, the same payments as he had settled upon
them during his life. The intrigues which, if suc-
cessful, would have secured to them so much at the ex-
pense of others, altogether failed. But the King lived
on—lived to survive the heir whose succession was so
distasteful to him. On the 10th of July, 1856, Prince
Fakir-ood-deen suddenly died. It was more than
suspected that he had been poisoned. He was seized
with deadly sickness and vomiting, after partaking
of a dish of curry. Extreme prostration and debility
ensued, and although the King's physician, Ahoun-
ollah, was called in, he could or would do nothing
to restore the dying Prince; and in a little time there
were lamentations in the Heir-Apparent's house, and
tidings were conveyed to the Palace that Fakir-ood-
deen was dead.*

How that night was spent in the apartments of

* The Palace Diary of the day
says: "Having felt hungry, the
Prince imagined that an empty sto-
mach promoted bile, and partook of
some bread with curry gravy, when
immediately the vomitings increased,
which produced great debility. Every
remedy to afford relief proved in-
effective, and H.R.H. rapidly sunk.
Meerza Elakhe Baksh sent for Hakim
Ahsan-ollah to prescribe. The Hakim

administered a clyster, which, how-
ever, did no good. At six o'clock,
the Heir Apparent was in a moribund
state, and immediately after the noise
of lamentation was heard in the direc-
tion of the Heir-Apparent's resi-
dence, and news was brought to the
Palace of H.R.H.'s demise. His
Majesty expressed his sorrow. The
Nawab Zeenut-Mehal Begum con-
doled with his Majesty."

1856. Queen Zeenut-Mehal can only be conjectured. Judged by its results, it must have been a night of stirring intrigue and excited activity. For when, on the following day, Sir Thomas Metcalfe waited on the King, his Majesty put into the hands of the Agent a paper containing a renewed expression of his desire to see the succession of Jewan Bakht recognised by the British Government. Enclosed was a document purporting to convey a request from others of the King's sons, that the offspring of Zeenut-Mehal, being endowed with "wisdom, merit, learning, and good manners," should take the place of the Heir-Apparent. Eight of the royal princes attached their seals to this address. But the eldest of the survivors—Meerza Korash by name—next day presented a memorial of his own, in which he set forth that his brethren had been induced to sign the paper by promises of increased money-allowances from the King, if they consented, and deprivation of income if they refused. An effort also was made to bribe Meerza Korash into acquiescence. He professed all filial loyalty to the King; declared his willingness to accede, as Heir-Apparent, to such terms as the King might suggest; but when he found that his father, instigated by the Queen Zeenut-Mehal, was bent on setting him aside altogether, he felt that there was nothing left for him but an appeal to the British Government. "As in this view," he wrote to the British Agent, "my ruin and birthright are involved, I deem it proper to represent my case, hoping that in your report due regard will be had to all the above circumstances. Besides being senior, I have accomplished a pilgrimage to Mecca, and have learned by heart the Koran; and my further attainments can be tested in an interview."

1856.

Views of
Lord Can-
ning.

By this time Lord Canning had succeeded to the Governor-Generalship, and a new Council sat beside him. The whole question of the Delhi succession, therefore, was considered and debated by men uninfluenced by any foregone expressions of opinion. In truth, the question was not a difficult one. The course which Lord Dalhousie meant to pursue was apparently the wisest course; although he had erred in believing that the Mahomedans of Upper India had no lingering affection for the sovereignty of the House of Delhi; and not less in supposing that the removal of the King and the Royal Family from the Palace in the city would not be painful and humiliating to them. But, with laudable forbearance, he had yielded to the opinions of others, even with the commission in his hands to execute his original designs. Lord Canning, therefore, found the Delhi question unsettled and undetermined in many of the most essential points. Bringing a new eye to the contemplation of the great danger and the great abomination of the Delhi Palace, he saw both, perhaps, even in larger dimensions than they had presented to the eye of his predecessor. He did not, therefore, hesitate to adopt as his own the views which Lord Dalhousie had recorded with respect to the removal of the Family on the death of Behaudur Shah. "It is as desirable as ever," he wrote, "that the Palace of Delhi—which is, in fact, the citadel of a large fortified town, and urgently required for military purposes—should be in the hands of the Government of the country, and that the pernicious privilege of exemption from the law, which is conceded to the Crown connexions and dependants of the King now congregated there, should, in the interests of morality and good government, cease." It was scarcely possible,

1856.

indeed, that much difference of opinion could obtain among statesmen with respect to the political and military expediency of placing this great fortified building, which dominated the city of Delhi, in the secure possession of British troops; nor could there be any doubt in the mind of a Christian man that, in the interests of humanity, we were bound to pull down all those screens and fences which had so long shut out the abominations of the Palace from the light of day, and excluded from its murky recesses the saving processes of the law.

But the extinction of the titular sovereignty was still an open question. Lord Canning had spent only a few months in India, and those few months had been passed in Calcutta. He had no personal knowledge of the feelings of the princes or people of Upper India; but he read in the minutes of preceding members of the Government that the traditions of the House of Timour had become faint in men's minds, if they had not been wholly effaced; and he argued that if there was force in this when written, there must be greater force after a lapse of years, as there was an inevitable tendency in time to obliterate such memories. "The reasons," he said, "which induced a change of purpose in 1850 are not fully on record;* but whatever they may have been, the course of time has assuredly strengthened the arguments by which the first intentions were supported, and possibly has removed the objection to it." He further argued that as much had already been done to strip the mock majesty of Delhi of the purple and gold with which it had once been be-

* That is, not on record in India. The reasons are fully stated above; but Lord Canning apparently did

not know that the "Court's despatch" was really not their despatch at all.

1856.

dizenized—that as first one privilege and then another, which had pampered the pride of the descendants of Timour, had been torn from them, there could be little difficulty in putting the finishing stroke to the work by abolishing the kingly title on the death of Behaudur Shah. “The presents,” he said, “which were at one time offered to the King by the Governor-General and Commander-in-Chief have been discontinued. The privilege of a coinage carrying his mark is now denied to him. The Governor-General’s seal no longer bears a device of vassalage; and even the Native chiefs have been prohibited from using one. It has been determined that these appearances of subordination and dependence could not be kept up consistently with a due respect for the real and solid power of the British Government, and the same may be said of the title of King of Delhi, with the fiction of paramount sovereignty which attaches to it. . . . To recognise the title of King, and a claim to the external marks of royalty in a new person would be an act purely voluntary on the part of the Government of India, and quite uncalled for. Moreover, it would not be accepted as a grace or favour by any but the individual himself. But,” added the Governor-General, “whatever be the degree of rank inherited, the heir whom in right and consistency the Government must recognize, is the eldest surviving son of the King, Prince Mirza Mahomed Korush, who has no claims from early reminiscences to see the unreal dignity of his House sustained for another generation in his own person.”

The policy to be observed having thus been determined, the Governor-General, with the full concurrence of his Council, proceeded to issue definite in-

1856. instructions for the guidance of his Agent. The substance of them is thus stated :

" 1. Should it be necessary to send a reply to the King's letter, the Agent must inform his Majesty that the Governor-General cannot sanction the recognition of Mirza Jewan Bakht as successor.

" 2. Mirza Mahomed Korash must not be led to expect that his recognition will take place on the same terms as Fakir-ood-deen's, and that during the King's lifetime no communication is to be made, either to his Majesty, or to any other member of the family, touching the succession.

" 3. On the King's demise, Prince Mirza Mahomed Korash should be informed that Government recognise him as the head of the family upon the same conditions as those accorded to Prince Mirza Fakir-ood-deen, excepting that, instead of the title of King, he should be designated and have the title of Shah-zada, and that this communication should be made to him not in the way of writing, negotiation, or bargaining, which it is not the intention of the Governor-General in Council to admit, but as the declaration of the mature and fixed determination of the Government of India.

" 4. A report to be made of the number of the privileged residents in the Palace ; to how many the privilege would extend, if the sons and grandsons, but no more distant relatives of any former King were admitted to it.

" 5. The sum of fifteen thousand rupees per mensem from the family stipend to be fixed as the future assignment of the heir of the family."

Intelligence of
Secrets
Mansab

Such, as represented by official documents—such

1856.

as they were then known to Lord Canning—were the state and prospects of the Delhi Family at the close of the year 1856. But there was something besides reserved for later revelation to the English ruler, which may be recorded in this place. The King, stricken in years, would have been well content to end his days in quietude and peace. But the restless intriguing spirit of the Queen Zeenut-Mehal would not suffer the aged monarch to drowse out the remainder of his days. She never ceased to cling to the hope that she might still live to see the recognition of her son as King of Delhi, and she never ceased to intrigue, at home and abroad, by the light of that pole-star of her ambition. One impediment had been removed by death. Another might be removed in the same way. And if the British Government would not favour the claims of Jewan Bakht, other powerful Governments might be induced to hold out to him a helping hand. It was stated afterwards that the King had never resented the determination to exclude the Delhi Family from the Palace, as the exclusion would not affect himself, and he had no care for the interests of his successor.* But it has been shown that Queen Zeenut-Mehal was loud in her lamentations when it was known that Fakir-ood-deen had surrendered this ancient privilege; for although she hated the recognised heir, she knew that he was not immortal; and changes of Government, moreover, might beget changes of opinion. There was still hope of the succession of Jewan Bakht so long as the old King lived; and therefore she desired to maintain all the privileges of the Kingship unimpaired to the last possible moment of doubt and expectancy.

* Evidence of Asan-oolah, on the trial of the King of Delhi.

1857.

Meanwhile, the youth in whom all these hopes centred, was growing up with a bitter hatred of the English in his heart. The wisdom, the learning, the good manners of the Heir-expectant were evinced by the pertinacity with which he was continually spitting his venom at the English. He did not hesitate to say, even in the presence of British subjects, that "in a short time he would have all the English under his feet."* But his courage was not equal to his bitterness; for if he were asked what he meant by such language, he would answer that he meant nothing. He was "only in sport." He had been for years past imbibing this venom in the Zenana, under the traitorous tuition of his mother, and he was ever anxious to spit it out, especially in the presence of women.

To what extent the intrigues thus matured in the Queen's apartments may, by the help of her agents, have been made to ramify beyond the Palace walls, it is not easy to conjecture. There is no proof that in or about Delhi the question of succession was regarded with any interest by the people. It little mattered to them whether one Prince or another were recognised as the head of the Family and the recipient of the lion's share of the pension. If attempts were made to excite the popular feeling to

* See the evidence of Mrs. Fleming, an English sergeant's wife, who thus recites an incident which occurred on the occasion of a visit paid by her to the Queen Zeenut-Mahal: "I was sitting down with his sister-in-law, and Jawan Bakht was standing by with his wife. My own daughter, Mrs. Scully, was also present. I was talking with Jawan Bakht's sister-in-law, when Mrs. Scully said to me, 'Mother, do you hear what this young rascal is saying? He is telling me that in a short time he will have all the infidel

English under his feet, and after that he will kill the Hindus.' Hearing this I turned round to Jawan Bakht, and asked him, 'What is that you are saying?' He replied that he was only joking. I said if what you threaten were to be the case, your head would be taken off first. He told me that the Persians were coming to Delhi, and that when they did so, we, that is, myself and daughter, should go to him, and he would save us. After this he left us. I think this must have occurred about the middle of April, 1857."

1857.

manifest itself on the side of Jewan Bakht, they were clearly a failure. But there is at least some reason to think that the emissaries of the Palace had been assiduous in their efforts to stir into a blaze the smouldering fires of Mahomedan zeal, and to excite vague hopes of some great Avatar from the North-West, which would restore the fallen fortunes of the House of Delhi, and give again to the Mahomedans of India the wealth and honour of which they had been deprived by the usurpation of the English.

So it happened that as the new year advanced there was unwonted excitement among the Mahomedans of Delhi. The Native newspapers teemed with vague hints of a something coming that was to produce great changes, resulting in the subversion of the power of the English. Exaggerated stories of the Persian war, and most mendacious statements of reverses sustained by the English, were freely circulated and volubly discussed. At one time it was said that the Persians had come down to Attock, and at another that they were in full march through the Bolan Pass. Then it was alleged that the real history of the war was, that the Shah of Persia had for five generations been accumulating munitions of war and heaping up treasure for the purpose of conquering India, and that the time had now come for action. Russia, it was said, had placed its immense resources freely at the disposal of the Shah. A thoroughly appointed army of nearly half a million of men, with immense supplies of military stores, had been sent to the aid of Persia; and if the regular military forces of the Czar were not sufficient, a large contingent of Russian police would be sent to reinforce them. There were eager speculations, too, as to the course that would be adopted by the French and the Ottoman Govern-

State of feeling in Delhi.

1357. ments. "Most people," it was declared in a Native newspaper, rejoicing in the name of the "Authentic News," "say that the King of France and the Emperor of Turkey will both side with the Persians." And it was added that the Russians were the real cause of the war; for, "using the Persians as a cloak, they intend to consummate their own designs by the conquest of Hindostan." Other writers affirmed that although Dost Mahomed, Ameer of Caubul, pretended to be the friend of the English, and took their money and their arms, he was prepared to turn both against the infidels and to cast in his lot with Persia. Alike in the Bazaars and in the Lines—in the shops of the money-changers and in the vestibules of the Palace—these stories excited vague sensations of wonder and of awe, which were strengthened by the circulation of the prophecy, which took different shapes, but pointed in all to the same result, that when the English had ruled in India for a hundred years they would be driven out, and a Native dynasty restored.*

* See the following, written by Sir James Outram in January, 1858: "What amazing statements and opinions one hears both in India and in England. What can be more ridiculous than the cry that the rebellion was caused by the annexation of Oude, or that it was solely a military mutiny?" [This, it should be observed, is addressed to Mr. Mangles.] "Our soldiers have deserted their standards and fought against us, but rebellion did not originate with the Sepoys. The rebellion was set on foot by the Mahomedans, and that long before we rescued Oude from her oppressors. It has been ascertained that prior to that Musulman fanatic traversed the land, reminding the faithful that it had been foretold in prophecy that

a foreign nation would rule in India a hundred years, after which the true believers would regain their ascendancy. When the century elapsed, the Mussulmans did their best to establish the truth of their prophet's declaration, and induced the Hindoo Sepoys, ever, as you know, the most credulous and silly of mankind, to raise the green standard, and forswear their allegiance, on the ground that we had determined to make the whole of India involuntary converts to Christianity." As to the text of the prediction, a native newspaper, citing it as the prophecy of the "revered saint, Shah Mamut-ollah" puts it in these words, the original of which are in verse: "After the fire-worshippers and Christians shall have held sway over the whole of

That the King was intriguing with the Shah of Persia was reported in the month of March to the Lieutenant-Governor of the North-Western Provinces by a Native correspondent, who added: "In the Palace, but more especially in the portion of it constituting the personal apartments of the King, the subject of conversation, night and day, is the early arrival of the Persians.* Hassan Askari† has, moreover, impressed the King with the belief that he has learned, through a divine revelation, that the dominion of the King of Persia will to a certainty extend to Delhi, or rather over the whole of Hindustan, and that the splendour of the sovereignty of Delhi will again revive, as the sovereign of Persia will bestow the crown upon the King. Throughout the Palace, but particularly to the King, this belief has been the cause of great rejoicing, so much so, that prayers are offered and vows are made, whilst, at the same time, Hassan Askari has entered upon the daily performance, at an hour and a half before sunset, of a course of propitiatory ceremonies to expedite the arrival of the Persians and the expulsion of the Christians." 1857. Warnings.

This warning was of course disregarded. A rooted confidence in our own strength and security, and a haughty contempt for the machinations of others, was at that time a condition of English statesmanship. It was the rule—and I fear that it is still the rule—in such a case to discern only the exaggerations and

Hindustan for a hundred years, and when injustice and oppression shall prevail in their Government, an Arab prince shall be born, who will ride forth triumphantly to slay them."

* It was stated, however, in evidence on the King's trial, that the war with Persia had excited very little interest in the Palace. Asan-coolah, the King's physician, said,

that the native newspapers, coming into the Palace, reported the progress of the war, but that "the King never seemed to evince any marked interest one way or the other."

† This man was a Mahomedan Priest of the Hereditary Priesthood, who dwelt near the Delhi Gate of the Palace, and was ever active in encouraging intrigues with Persia.

1857. absurdities with which such statements are crusted over. The British officer to whom such revelations are made sees at a glance all that is preposterous and impossible in them; and he dismisses them as mere follies. He will not suffer himself to see that there may be grave and significant truths beneath the outer crust of wild exaggeration. When, therefore, Lieutenant-Governor Colvin received the letter announcing that the King of Delhi was intriguing with the Shah of Persia, and that the latter would ere long restore the monarchy of the Mogul, he laughed the absurdity to scorn, and pigeon-holed it among the curiosities of his administration. He did not consider that the simple fact of such a belief being rife in Delhi and the neighbourhood was something not to be disregarded. It in reality very little mattered whether the King of Delhi and the Shah of Persia were or were not in communication with each other, so long as the Mahomedans of Upper India believed that they were. It is the state of feeling engendered by such a belief, not the fact itself, that is really significant and important. But there is nothing in which English statesmanship in India fails more egregiously than in this incapacity to discern, or unwillingness to recognise, the prevailing sentiments of the people by whom our statesmen are surrounded. The letter sent to the Lieutenant-Governor of the North-Western Provinces was produced, at a later period, as strong evidence of the guilt of the King of Delhi; but the recorded history of this document is, that it was "found among the papers of the late Mr. Colvin."

*Intrigues
with Persia.*

The story of the correspondence between the King of Delhi and the Shah of Persia was not a mere fable. Authentic record of such transactions is rarely to be obtained, and history must, therefore, fall back upon

1857.

evidence which may not be altogether conclusive. The facts, however, appear to be these.* The power of Mahomedanism is greatly weakened by sectarian divisions. A Soonce hates a Sheeah, or a Sheeah hates a Soonce, almost as much as either hates a Christian. The King of Delhi was a Soonce, whilst the King of Oude and the Shah of Persia were Sheeahs. Now, it happened that whilst Behaudur Shah was in great tribulation because he could not persuade the English Government to gratify the cherished wishes of his favourite wife, he was minded to become a Sheeah. There were some members of his family settled in Oude, who were also of this persuasion. Whether by invitation, or whether of his own motion, is not very apparent, but one of them, the King's nephew, Meerza Hyder by name, accompanied by a brother, visited his Majesty at Delhi, and carried back on his return tidings that the great change had been effected, and that the Mogul sought to be admitted within the pale of the Sheeah religion. This man was known in the Delhi Palace as one rejoicing in intrigue. It could not have been difficult to persuade the old King that the fact of his conversion might be turned to good account, and that if nothing else would come of it, it would make the Shah of Persia and the King of Oude more willing to assist him in the troubles and perplexities by which he was surrounded. It is probable that he had no very clear notion of what might come of such an alliance—no very strong hope that it would end in the overthrow of the English—but he was readily persuaded to address letters to the King of Persia,

* They are mainly derived from the evidence of Asan-oolah, the King's physician, of all the witnesses on the trial of Behaudur Shah the most accurate and trustworthy. I see no reason to question his statements.

1857. and to despatch them secretly by confidential agents. And this was done before the emissaries from Lucknow had taken their departure. There is a suspicion also that he sent letters to Russia; but, if he did, in all probability they never reached their destination. There was, however, from that time a vague belief in the Palace that both the Persians and the Russians were coming to the deliverance of the King, and that ere long he would again be surrounded by all the splendour that irradiated the Mogul throne in the meridian of its glory.

These intrigues, whatever their importance, were well known in Delhi in the early months of 1857; and the impression which they produced on the minds of the people was strengthened by the sight of a proclamation which was posted on the Jumna Musjeed in the middle of the month of March. This proclamation, purporting to have been issued by the King of Persia, set forth that a Persian army was coming to release India from the grasp of the English, and that it behoved all true Mahomedans to gird up their loins resolutely, and to fight against the unbelievers.* The name of Mahomed Sadik was attached to it; but none knew who he was. In outward appearance it was but an insignificant affair; though it bore rude illustrations representing a sword and a shield, it does

* It is well known that a copy of a proclamation addressed to Mahomedans generally, urging a war of extermination against the English, was found in the tent of the Persian prince at Mohumrah, after the engagement which took place there in the spring of 1857. There was no special reference in this document to the restoration of the Delhi sovereignty; it called upon "the old and

the young, the small and the great, the wise and the ignorant, the ryot and the sepoy, all without exception to arise in defence of the orthodox faith of the Prophet." Afterwards it was frankly acknowledged by the Persian Government that they had attempted to create a diversion against us in India—such expedients being all fair in war.

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not appear to have produced any great excitement in Delhi, and the attention which it attracted was short-lived, for the paper, after the lapse of a few hours, was torn down by order of the magistrate. But the native newspapers published the substance of the proclamation, accompanying it with vague and mysterious hints, or with obscure comments, obviously intended, in some instances, to be read in a contrary sense. There was in these effusions hostility to the British Government—but hostility driven by fear to walk warily. Ambiguous, enigmatical language suited the occasion. It was stated that a communication had been addressed to the magistrate, informing him that in the course of a few weeks Cashmere would be taken; the intent being, it is said, to signify that the Cashmere Gate of Delhi would be in the hands of the enemies of the British Government. There was plainly a very excited state of public feeling about Delhi. The excitement was, doubtless, fomented by some inmates of the Palace; and the King's Guards conversed with the Sepoys of the Company, and the talk was still of a something coming. But Behaudur Shah, in the spring of 1857, was never roused to energetic action. Much was done in his name of which he knew nothing, and much besides which he weakly suffered. And as, in that month of May, news came from Meerut that there was great excitement among the soldiery, and some of the Native officers at Delhi were summoned to take part in the great on-coming trial, those who sat at the King's door talked freely about the revolt of the Native

* See evidence of Sir Theophilus Metcalfe. It was stated, however, in the Native papers, that the proclamation was posted up in the streets and lanes of the city.

1857. army, and in the vestibules of the Palace it was proclaimed that the dynasty of the Moguls would soon be restored, and that all the high offices of State would be held by the people of the country.*

* Mokund Lal, the King's secretary, said: "I don't know whether any direct proposals came to the prisoner, but the King's personal attendants, sitting about the entrance to his private apartments, used to converse among themselves, and say

that very soon, almost immediately, the army would revolt and come to the palace, when the Government of the King would be re-established, and all the old servants would be greatly promoted and advanced in position and emoluments."

CHAPTER II.

STATE OF THE THIRD CAVALRY—THE COURT OF INQUIRY—THE COURT MARTIAL—IMPRISONMENT OF THE EIGHTY-FIVE—THE TENTH OF MAY—RELEASE OF THE PRISONERS—GENERAL REVOLT OF THE SEPOYS—INACTIVITY OF THE EUROPEAN TROOPS—ESCAPE OF THE MUTINEERS—QUESTION OF RESPONSIBILITY CONSIDERED.

WHILST the vague feeling of excitement above described was gathering strength and consistency at Delhi, and the "something coming" appeared to be approaching nearer and nearer, events were developing themselves in the great military station of Meerut, thirty miles distant, which were destined to precipitate a more momentous crisis in the imperial city than had been anticipated by the inmates of the palace. The Native troops at that great headquarters station were smouldering into rebellion, and the Sepoy War was about to commence. The brief telegraphic story already recorded,* when it expanded into detailed proportions, took this disastrous shape.

The Third Regiment of Native Cavalry was commanded by Colonel Carmichael Smyth. He had graduated in the regiment, and had seen some service with it, but he had never earned the entire confidence of officers or men. He was not wanting

Colonel
Smyth and
the Third
Cavalry.

April—May,
1857.

April,
1857.

in intelligence or in zeal, but he lacked temper and discretion, and the unquestionable honesty of his nature was of that querulous, irritable cast which makes a man often uncharitable and always unpopular. He had a quick eye for blots of every kind; and, being much addicted to newspaper-writing, seldom failed to make them known to the public. Nobody knew better than Colonel Smyth that the Bengal Army was hovering on the brink of mutiny. He had, in the earlier part of the year, visited the great fair at Hurdwar, where the disaffection of the Nineteenth Regiment had been freely discussed. He had afterwards gone to Mussooree, where he learnt from day to day what was passing at Umballah, and he was so impressed by what he heard respecting the general state of the Sepoy regiments and their readiness for revolt, that he had written to the Commander-in-Chief to inform him of the dangerous state of the Army. But when the general order went forth that the men were no longer to bite the cartridges, Colonel Smyth thought that the opportunity was one of which he should avail himself to allay the excitement in his own regiment, and he therefore held the parade of the 24th of April, with results which have been already described.*

General
Hewitt.

Not so thought the officer commanding the Meerut division of the Army. General Hewitt was an old Company's officer, who had risen to high rank by the slow process of regimental and army promotion, and who in quiet times might have drowsed through the years of his employment on the Staff without manifesting any remarkable incapacity for command. The burden of nearly seventy years was aggravated by

* *Auto*, vol. i. p. 507.

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1857.

the obesity of his frame and the inertness of his habits. But he was a kind-hearted, hospitable man, liked by all, and by some respected. It was his desire to keep things quiet, and, if possible, to make them pleasant. He lamented, therefore, that Colonel Smyth had made that crucial experiment upon the fidelity of his regiment which had resulted in open mutiny. "Oh! why did you have a parade?" he said to the Colonel. "My division has kept quiet, and if you had only waited another month or so, all would have blown over."

It was necessary, however, after what had occurred, in an official point of view to do something. So he ordered a Native Court of Inquiry to be assembled. The Court was composed of six members, four of whom were Native officers of the Infantry and two Native officers of the Cavalry. The witnesses examined, including those who had manufactured and served out the cartridges, said that there was nothing objectionable in them—nothing that could offend the religious scruples of Hindoo or Mahomedan—nothing that in any way differed from the composition of the cartridges which the Sepoys had been using for years. The oldest troopers in the regiment, Hindoo and Mahomedan, were examined; but they could give no satisfactory account of the causes of alarm and disaffection in the regiment. They could only say that a general impression of impurity existed. One Mussulman trooper, with much insolence of manner, blustered out, "I have doubts about the cartridges. They may look exactly like the old ones, but how do I know that pig's fat has not been smeared over them?" But the next witness who was examined—a Hindoo—took one of the cartridges into his hand and handled it freely, to show

The Court of
Inquiry.

April,
1857.

that in his eyes there was nothing offensive in the new ammunition. Altogether, the Court of Inquiry elicited nothing. It dealt with material facts, which were well known before. But it was not the palpable, but the impalpable—a vague and voiceless idea—that had driven the regiment to mutiny. That which the troopers dreaded was not pollution, but opinion. They were troubled, not by any fear of desecration to their faith or of injury to their caste, but by the thought of what their comrades would say of them. In a military sense, in an official sense, all this was unreasonable in the extreme; but every man felt in his inmost heart more than he could explain in intelligible words, and the shadow of a great fear was upon him, more terrible for its indistinctness.

The proceedings of the Court of Inquiry were sent to Head-Quarters; and whilst the orders of the Commander-in-Chief were awaited, the Eighty-five were dismissed from duty, and ordered to abide in their Lines. There was, then, for a little space, a fever of expectancy. What meetings, and conspiracies, and oath-takings there may have been in the Sepoys' quarter during that long week of waiting, can be only dimly conjectured; but one form of expression, in which their feelings declared themselves, was patent to all. It was written in characters of fire, and blazed out of the darkness of the night. From the verandahs of their houses the European officers saw these significant illuminations, and knew what they portended. The burnings had commenced on the evening preceding the fatal parade of the 24th of April, when an empty hospital had been fired.* Then followed a more expressive conflagration. The house of a Sepoy named Bridge-Mohun Singh, who

* Colonel Smyth says it was a horse-hospital.

May,
1857.

had been the first to practise the new mode of using the cartridges, was burnt down. This man (the son of a pig-keeper), who had been dismissed from an Infantry regiment and imprisoned for theft, had enlisted under a new name in the Third Cavalry, and had managed so to ingratiate himself with the Commanding Officer, that he was seldom absent from the Colonel's bungalow. To the whole regiment, and especially to its high-caste men, this was an offence and an abomination, and nothing could more clearly indicate the feeling in the Lines of the Third than the fact that this man's house was burnt down by the troopers of his own regiment.

In the bungalows also of the European residents, during this first week of May, there was much excitement and discussion. There was plainly a very disagreeable entanglement of events out of which it was not easy to see the way, and people said freely that it ought never to have arisen. But speculation with respect to the Future was even more busy than censure with respect to the Past. What, it was asked, would be the issue of the reference to Headquarters? The more general belief was, that orders would come for the dismissal of the recusant troopers; but even this, it was thought, would be a harsh measure, that might drive others, by force of sympathy, to rebellion. It was an interval which might have been turned by our English officers to good account in soothing the feelings of their men, and explaining everything that was of a doubtful or suspicious character. Some, indeed, did strive, with a wise foreknowledge of the coming danger, to accomplish this good object; but others believed that all was right, that there was no likelihood of their regiments being driven either by their fears or their

May,
1857.

The Court-
Martial.

resentments to revolt against the Law; and they drowsed on placidly in the conviction that it was but an accidental ebullition, provoked by the mismanagement of an indiscreet Commanding Officer, and that the general temper of the Native troops at Meerut was all that could be desired.

In the first week of May the instructions so eagerly looked-for were received from the Head-Quarters of the Army. The fiat of General Anson had gone forth from Simlah. A Native General Court-Martial was to be assembled at Meerut for the trial of the Eighty-five. The prisoners were then confined in an empty hospital, and a guard of their own regiment was placed over them. The tribunal before which they were to be brought up for trial was composed of fifteen Native officers, of whom six were Mahomedans and nine were Hindoos. Ten of these members were furnished by the regiments at Meerut—Artillery, Cavalry, and Infantry; five came from the Infantry regiments at Delhi. On the 6th of May the Court commenced its sittings,* and continued its proceedings on the two following days. The examination of Colonel Smyth and the other witnesses for the prosecution elicited no new facts, and, indeed, the whole case of military disobedience was so clear, that the trial, though it was protracted during three days, was little more than a grim formality. Every man felt that his condemnation was certain, and sullenly abided the issue. The prisoners could put forth no defence which either Law or Discipline could accept.

* The charge was, "For having at Meerut, on the 24th of April, 1857, severally and individually disobeyed the lawful command of their superior officer, Brevet-Colonel G. M. C. Smyth, commanding the Third

Regiment of Light Cavalry, by not having taken the cartridges tendered to each of them individually for use that day on parade, when ordered by Colonel Smyth to take the said cartridges."

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But when the Havildar Muttadeen Singh pleaded, on behalf of himself and comrades, that they suspected some foul design because their Commandant took so much pains to convince them that it was all right, and to induce them to fire the cartridges, there was something not altogether irrational or illogical in the argument. If there was nothing in the ammunition different from that which they had always used, why, it was asked, should the proceedings of the Colonel have been so different?* But in effect the defence of the prisoners was little more than a confession, and the Court, by a vote of fourteen members against one, found the Eighty-five guilty, and sentenced them to imprisonment and hard labour for ten years. But with this there went forth a recommendation to "favourable consideration on account of the good character which the prisoners had hitherto borne, as testified to by their Commanding Officer, and on account of their having been misled by vague reports regarding the cartridges."

The proceedings went up, in due course, to the General commanding the Division, and Hewitt approved and confirmed the sentence. "I would willingly attend," he remarked, "to the recommendation of the Court, if I could find anything in the conduct of the prisoners that would warrant me in so doing. Their former good character has been blasted by pre-

The sentence confirmed.

* The same difficulty suggested itself to the Court. Colonel Smyth was asked, "Why did you tell the men that they would have to fire, instead of merely ordering them to do so?" Colonel Smyth's answer was: "The parade was in orders the day before, and entered in the order-book as usual, and each man was ordered to receive three cartridges. I wished to show them the new way of loading without putting

the cartridges to the mouth, and attended the parade for that purpose. When I came on parade, the Adjutant informed me that the men had not taken their cartridges, and it was on that account I ordered the Havildar-Major to take a cartridge and load and fire before them; and it was then, also, that I said, that when the whole Army hear of this way of loading they would be much pleased, and exclaim, 'Wah! wah!'

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sent misbehaviour, and their having allowed themselves to be influenced by vague reports instead of attending to the advice and obeying the orders of their European superiors, is the gist of the offence for which they have been condemned. It appears from these proceedings that these misguided men, after consultation together on the night of the 23rd of April, 1857, came to the resolution of refusing their cartridges. Having so far forgotten their duty as soldiers, their next step was to send word to their troop captains that they would not take their cartridges unless the whole of the troops in the station would do so likewise. Some of them even had the insolence to desire that firing parades might be deferred till the agitation about cartridges among the Native troops had come to a close. In this state of insubordination they appeared on parade on the morning of the 24th, and there consummated the crime for which they are now about to suffer, by repeatedly refusing cartridges that had been made as usual in their regimental magazine, when assured, too, by Colonel Smyth that the cartridges had no grease on them—that they were old ones, and exactly similar to what had been in use in the regiment for thirty or forty years. Even now they attempt to justify so gross an outrage upon discipline by alleging that they had doubts of the cartridges. There has been no acknowledgment of error—no expression of regret—no pleading for mercy.” “To the majority of the prisoners,” therefore, it was added, “no portion of the sentence will be remitted. I observe, however, that some of them are very young, and I am willing to make allowance for their having been misled by their more experienced comrades, and under these circumstances I remit one half of the

sentence passed upon the following men, who have not been more than five years in the service." And then followed the names of eleven young troopers, whose term of imprisonment was commuted to five years. The sentence was to be carried into effect at daybreak on the 9th of May.

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The morning dawned, lowering and gusty, and the troops of the Meerut Brigade were drawn up on the ground of the Sixtieth Rifles to see the prisoners formally dismissed to their doom. The Third Cavalry had received their orders to attend unmounted. The European troops and the Artillery, with their field-guns, were so disposed as to threaten instant death to the Sepoys on the first symptom of resistance. Under a guard of Rifles and Carabineers, the Eighty-five were then brought forward, clad in their regimental uniforms—soldiers still; and then the sentence was read aloud, which was to convert soldiers into felons. Their accoutrements were taken from them, and their uniforms were stripped from their backs. Then the armourers and the smiths came forward with their shackles and their tools, and soon, in the presence of that great concourse of their old comrades, the Eighty-five stood, with the outward symbols of their dire disgrace fastened upon them. It was a piteous spectacle, and many there were moved with a great compassion, when they saw the despairing gestures of those wretched men, among whom were some of the very flower of the regiment—soldiers who had served the British Government in trying circumstances and in strange places, and who had never before wavered in their allegiance. Lifting up their hands and lifting up their voices, the prisoners implored the General to have mercy upon them, and not to consign them to so ignominious a doom.

May 9.
Execution of
the sentence.

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Then, seeing that there was no other hope, they turned to their comrades and reproached them for quietly suffering this disgrace to descend upon them. There was not a Sepoy present who did not feel the rising indignation in his throat. But in the presence of those loaded field-guns and those grooved rifles, and the glittering sabres of the Dragoons, there could not be a thought of striking. The prisoners were marched off to their cells, to be placed under the custody of a guard of their own countrymen; the parade was dismissed; and the Sepoys, Cavalry and Infantry, went, silent and stern, to their work, to talk over the incidents of that mournful morning parade.*

It was Saturday. So far as English eyes could see or English brains could understand, the day passed quietly over. The troop-captains of the Third Cavalry visited the prisoners in the gaol, which was situated at a distance of about two miles from the cantonment, to be for the last time the channel of communication between them and the outer world. It was their duty to adjust the balances of the Sepoys' pay, and they were anxious, in the kindness of their hearts, to arrange the settlements of the prisoners' debts, and to carry any messages which the men might desire to send to the families from whom they had been sundered. And whilst this was going on in the gaol, wild reports were flying about the Bazaars, and there was a great fear in the Lines, for it was

* Lord Canning's commentary on these proceedings may be given here: "The rivetting of the men's fetters on parade, occupying, as it did, several hours, in the presence of many who were already ill-disposed, and many who believed in the cart-ridge fable, must have stung the brigade to the quick. The consign-

ing the eighty-five prisoners, after such a ceremony, to the gaol, with no other than a native guard over them, was, considering the nature of their offence, and the known temper of a part of the army, a folly that is inconceivable."—*Letter to Mr. Vernon Smith, June 5, 1857. MS. Correspondence.*

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said that the Europeans were about to take possession of the magazines, and that the two thousand fetters, of which Rumour had spoken before, were now ready, and that the work of the morning was only an experiment and a beginning. But the shades of evening fell upon Meerut, and the English residents, after their accustomed ride, met each other at dinner, and talked cheerfully and confidently of the Past and the Future. At one dinner-table, where the Commissioner and his wife and the Colonel of the Eleventh Sepoys were present, a rumour was mentioned to the effect that the walls had been placarded with a Mahomedan proclamation calling upon the people to rise against the English. But the general feeling was one of indignant disbelief, and each man went to his home and laid his head upon his pillow as tranquilly as though from one end of Meerut to another there had been no bitter resentments to be gratified, in the breasts of any but the manacled, harmless, helpless prisoners in the great gaol.

I must pause here, a little space, for the better explanation of what follows, to speak of the great cantonment of Meerut. This military station was one of the most extensive in India. It covered an area of some five miles in circumference, the space being divided by a great mall or esplanade, along which ran a deep nullah, or ditch, cutting the station into two separate parallelograms, the one containing the European and the other the Native force. The European Lines were on the northern quarter of Meerut, the Artillery Barracks being to the right, the Dragoons to the left, and the Rifles in the centre. Between the barracks of the two last stood the station church; a great plain or parade-ground stretching out still further to the northward. The Sepoy Lines

The Meerut
Cantonment.

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lay to the south of the cantonment, and between what may be called the European and Native quarters, there was an intervening space covered with shops and houses, surrounded by gardens and trees. Still further to the southward lay the city. The officers of the European regiments and Artillery occupied bungalows along the northern line, whilst the Sepoy officers dwelt chiefly near their own men. The Brigadier's house was on the right, not far from the Artillery Barracks and Mess-House. The General's residence was nearer to the Native Lines. The most noticeable features of the whole, and those which it is most important to bear in mind in the perusal of what follows, are the division of the great cantonment into two parts, the distance of the European barracks from the Native Lines, and the probability, therefore of much that was passing in the latter being wholly unknown to the occupants of the former.

Sunday,
May 10.

The fierce May sun rose on the Sabbath morning, and the English residents prepared themselves to attend the ministrations of their religion in the station church. There was, indeed, a lull; but the signs of it, afterwards noted, clearly presaged that there was something in the air. In the European barracks it appeared that there was a general desertion of the Native servants, whose business it was to administer to the wants of the white soldiery, and in the bungalows of the officers there was a disposition on the part of their domestics, especially of those who had been hired at Meerut, to absent themselves from their masters' houses. But these things were observable at the time only as accidental circumstances of little significance, and the morning service was performed and the mid-day heats were lounged through, as in times of ordinary security. Severed from the

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great mass of the people, the English could see nothing of an unwonted character on that Sunday afternoon; but in the Lines of the Native soldiery, in the populous Bazaars, and even in the surrounding villages there were signs of a great commotion. The very children could see that something was about to happen. Men of all kinds were arming themselves. The dangerous classes were in a state of unwonted excitement and activity. Many people of bad character had come in from the adjacent hamlets, and even from more remote places, as though they discerned the prospect of a great harvest. Among the mixed population of the Lines and the Bazaars were men agitated by emotions of the most varied character. Hatred of the English, desire for revenge, religious enthusiasm, thirst for plunder, were all at work within them; but paramount over all was a nameless fear; for, ever as the day advanced, the report gained strength that the English soldiery, armed to the teeth, would soon be let loose amongst them; that every Sepoy before nightfall would have fetters on his wrists; that the People would be given up to massacre, and the Bazaars to plunder.

The sun went down and the time came for evening service, and the English chaplains prepared themselves for their ministrations. One has narrated how, when he was about to start with his wife for the station church, the Native nurse warned them that there was danger, and besought her mistress to remain at home. The woman said that there would be a fight with the Sepoys, but the Chaplain listened incredulously to the statement, and taking his wife and children with him, entered his carriage, and was driven to church.* In the church-compound he met

* See the Chaplain's (Mr. Rotton's) Narrative. He left his wife and children in a place of safety on the way to church.

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his colleague and other Christian people with a look of anxious inquiry on their pale, scared faces. It was plain that the warning by which it was endeavoured to stay his progress was something more than an utterance of vague suspicion or senseless fear. Sounds and sights had greeted the church-goers on their way which could not be misinterpreted. The unwonted rattling of musketry on that Sabbath evening, the assembly-call of the buglers, the hurrying to and fro of armed men on the road, the panic-struck looks of the unarmed, the columns of smoke that were rising against the fast-darkening sky, all told the same story. The Native troops at Meerut had revolted.

Outbreak of
the Sepoys.

It will never be known with certainty whence arose the first promptings to that open and outrageous rebellion of which these sounds and sights were the signs. What meetings and conspiracies there may have been in the Lines—whether there was any organised scheme for the release of the prisoners, the burning of cantonments, and the murder of all the Christian officers, can be only dimly conjectured. The probabilities are at variance with the assumption that the Native troops at Meerut deliberately launched themselves into an enterprise of so apparently desperate a character. With a large body of English troops—Horse, Foot, and Artillery—to confront them in the hour of mutiny, what reasonable hopes could there be of escape from swift and crushing retribution? They knew the temper and the power of English soldiers too well to trust to a contingency of inaction of which the Past afforded no example. There was not a station in India at which an outbreak of Native troops could appear to be so hopeless an experiment as in that great military cantonment which had become the Head-Quarters of the finest

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Artillery Regiment in the world. But this very feeling of our overpowering strength at Meerut may have driven the Sepoys into the great panic of despair, out of which came the spasm of madness which produced such unexpected results on that Sabbath night. There had been for some days an ominous report, of which I have already spoken, to the effect that the Europeans were about to fall suddenly on the Sepoy regiments, to disarm them, and to put every man of them in chains. In fear and trembling they were looking for a confirmation of this rumour in every movement of the English troops. When, therefore, the Sixtieth Rifles were assembling for church parade, the Sepoys believed that the dreaded hour had arrived. The Third Cavalry were naturally the most excited of all. Eighty-five of their fellow-soldiers were groaning in prison. Sorrow, shame, and indignation were strong within them for their comrades' sake, and terror for their own. They had been taunted by the courtesans of the Bazaar, who asked if they were men to suffer their comrades to wear such anklets of iron;* and they believed that what they had seen on the day before was but a foreshadowing of a greater cruelty to come. So, whilst the European soldiers were preparing themselves for church parade, the Native troopers were mounting their horses and pricking forward towards the great gaol.

Then it became miserably apparent that a fatal error had been committed. There were no European

Rescue of the
prisoners.

* This is stated very distinctly by Mr. T. C. Wilson (an excellent authority) in his interesting Moradabad Report. "And now," he writes, "the frail ones' taunts were heard far and wide, and the rest of the regiment was assailed with words like these: 'Your brethren have

been ornamented with these anklets and incarcerated; and for what? Because they would not swerve from their creed; and you, cowards as you are, sit still indifferent to your fate. If you have an atom of manhood in you, go and release them.'"

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soldiers posted to protect the prison-house in which were the condemned malefactors of the Sepoy Army. The prisoners had been given over to the "civil power," and an additional guard, drawn from the Twentieth Sepoy Regiment, had been placed over the gaol. The troopers knew what was the temper of that regiment. They had no fear for the result, so they pushed on, some in uniform, man and horse fully accoutred, some in their stable dresses with only watering rein and horse-cloth on their chargers, but all armed with sabre and with pistol. Soon under the walls of the gaol—soon busy at their work—they met with, as they expected, no opposition. The rescue began at once. Loosening the masonry around the gratings of the cells in which their comrades were confined, they wrenched out the iron bars and helped the prisoners through the apertures. A Native smith struck off their chains, and once again free men, the Eighty-five mounted behind their deliverers, and rode back to the Lines. The troopers of the Third Cavalry at that time had no other work in hand but the rescue of their comrades. The other prisoners in the gaol were not released, the buildings were not fired, and the European gaoler and his family were left unmolested.*

* There are conflicting statements on the subject of the release of the prisoners in the new gaol. Dr. O'Callaghan ("Scattered Chapters on the Indian Mutiny") asserts, that not only the eighty-five, but all the other prisoners had been released by the infantry guard before the cavalry arrived. When the troopers arrived, he says, "After their rapid and furious gallop at the gaol, they found their comrades already released and emerging from incarceration, and the general crowd of felons also rushing rapidly forth to join in

the fire, pillage, and slaughter." But Mr. Commissioner Williams, in his very circumstantial official report, says that the troopers "dug out of the wall the gratings of some of the windows of the ward in which the eighty-five mutineers were confined, and took their comrades away, the guard of the Twentieth accompanying, and the armed guard of the gaol soon followed. None of the other convicts, in number about eight hundred, were released by the cavalry troopers, nor was any injury done by them to the buildings." But he adds,

Meanwhile, the Infantry regiments had broken into open revolt. The Sepoys of the Eleventh and the Twentieth were in a state of wild excitement. Maddened by their fears—expecting every moment that the Europeans would be upon them—believing that there was one great design in our hearts to manacle the whole of them, and, perhaps, to send them as convicts across the black water, they thought that the time had come for them to strike for their liberties, for their lives, for their religions. So it happened that when the excitement in the Lines was made known to some of our English officers, and they went down, as duty bade them, to endeavour to allay it, they found that the men whom they had once regarded as docile children had been suddenly turned into furious assailants. Among those who, on that Sunday evening, rode down to the Sepoys' Lines was Colonel Finnis, who commanded the Eleventh. A good soldier, beloved by officers and by men, he had the old traditionary faith in the Sepoys which it became those, who had served with them and knew their good qualities, to cherish. Strong in the belief of the loyalty of his regiment, Finnis, with other officers of his corps, went into the midst of them to remonstrate and to dissuade. He was speaking to his men, when a soldier of the Twentieth discharged his musket and wounded the Colonel's horse. Presently another musket was discharged into his body. The ball entered at his back; he fell from his horse, and a volley was fired into him. He died, "riddled with bullets." Thus the Sepoys of the Twentieth had slain the Colonel of the Eleventh Regiment, and the

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Revolt of the
Infantry.Death of
Colonel
Finnis.

"About three hundred or four hundred Sepoys released the convicts from the old goal, which is between the city and the Native Lines, and which contained about seven hundred and twenty prisoners altogether."

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bullets of the former had been scattered in the ranks of the latter. For a little space the two regiments looked at each other; but there was no doubt of the issue. The Eleventh broke into open revolt, and fraternised with their comrades of the Twentieth.

Progress of
the Revolt.

The whole of the Native Regiments at Meerut had now revolted. The Sepoys of the Infantry and the troopers of the Cavalry had made common cause against us. Hindoos and Mahomedans were stirred by one impulse to slaughter the Feringhees, man, woman, and child. So as the sun went down the massacre went on, and our people, who were returning from the unaccomplished evening service, or, ignorant of the excitement and the danger, were starting for the wonted evening ride or drive, were fiercely assailed by the infuriated soldiery, and shot down or sabred as they sate their horses or leaned back in their carriages to enjoy the coolness of the air. Wheresoever a stray English soldier was to be found, he was murdered without remorse. The Bazaars and the neighbouring villages were pouring forth their gangs of plunderers and incendiaries. From every street and alley, and from the noisome suburbs, they streamed forth, like wild beasts from their lairs, scenting the prey.* The prisoners in the gaols were

* "Cities, like forests, have their dens, in which everything that is most wicked and formidable conceals itself. The only difference is that what hides itself thus in cities is ferocious, unclean, and little—that is to say, ugly; what conceals itself in the forests is ferocious, savage, and grand—that is to say, beautiful. Den for den, those of the beasts are preferable to those of men, and caverns are better than hiding-places."—*Victor Hugo*. Mr. Commissioner Williams, in his official report above quoted, says that the townspeople had armed them-

selves and were ready for the onslaught before the Sepoys had commenced the carnage. "Before a shot had been fired, the inhabitants of the Sudder Bazaar went out armed with swords, spears, and clubs, any weapon they could lay hands on, collected in crowds in every lane and alley, and at every outlet of the Bazaar; and the residents of the wretched hamlets, which had been allowed to spring up all round it and between it and the city, were to be seen similarly armed, pouring out to share in what they evidently knew was going to happen."

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let loose, and the police became their comrades in crime. But so little concert and arrangement was there, that some detachments on guard-duty, posted in the European quarter of the great straggling cantonment, appear to have remained faithful to their English masters after their fellow-soldiers had broken out into open revolt. Indeed, whilst in one part of the cantonment the Sepoys were butchering their officers, in another they were saluting them as they passed, as though nothing had happened.* Even at the Treasury, with all its manifest temptations, the Guard stood staunchly to its duty, and at a later hour made over the charge in all its integrity to the Europeans sent to defend it. Not a rupee had been touched by the Sepoys. And when the rabble from the city swarmed upon it, they found it covered by a guard of Riflemen.

But, in the midst of all this great tribulation, there was, in the hearts of our Christian people, a strength of confidence which calmed and comforted them; for they said to each other, or they said to themselves, "The Europeans will soon be upon them." There were two regiments of Sepoy Infantry at Meerut, and a regiment of Sepoy Cavalry. But the English mustered a battalion of Riflemen, a regiment of Dragoons armed with carbines, and a large force of European Artillery, with all the accessories of Head-Quarters.†

* I do not mean to signify that the Sepoys in the European quarter of the cantonment were uniformly quiescent at this time; for I am informed that the Guard at Brigadier Wilson's houses fired at some officers who were passing, before they broke away. But there was obviously no general concert.

† History, however, must not exaggerate the actual strength of this European force. There were some

deteriorating circumstances, of which account must be taken. A considerable number of the Carabineers could not ride, and there were no horses for them, if they could. Not more than half of the regiment (five hundred strong) were mounted. Many of the European gunners, too, were young recruits, imperfectly acquainted with artillery drill. There were only two field-batteries fully equipped.

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May 10. There was not an Englishwoman in the cantonment—the model cantonment of India—who, remembering the presence of this splendid body of White soldiers, had any other thought, at the first semblance of open mutiny, than that there must be a sad massacre of the Native troops. With a regiment of British Dragoons and a few Galloper guns, Gillespie, half a century before, had crushed the mutiny of Vellore, and saved the Southern Peninsula from universal revolt and rebellion.* He struck decisively because he struck at once. And no one now doubted that a blow struck with promptitude and vigour on this Sabbath evening would save Meerut, and check the nascent activities of revolt in the adjacent country. But by God's providence, for whatsoever purpose designed, this first great revolt of the Sepoys was suffered, unchecked, unpunished, to make headway in a clear field, and to carry everything before it. The great confidence of the Christian people was miserably misplaced. They looked for a deliverance that never came. In some parts of the great cantonment they were abandoned to fire and slaughter as hopelessly as though there had not been a single English soldier in that great Head-Quarters of the Meerut Division.

Inaction of
the Euro-
peans.

The story of this great failure is not easily told, and the attempt to tell it cannot be made without sadness. Many narratives of the events of that night have been written; and each writer has told, with graphic distinctness of detail, what he himself saw and heard; but the confusion of those few critical hours is fully represented by the confusedness of the entire story; and it is difficult to impart unity and consistency to

* See *ante*, vol. i. pages 230—232.

a scene, made up of scattered effects, bewildering and distracting. What was wanted in that conjuncture was the one man to impart to our British manhood the promptitude and unity of action which would have crushed the mutiny and saved the place—perhaps the country: and that one man did not arise in the hour of our tribulation.

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There were three officers at Meerut whose bearing in that critical hour the historian is especially bound to investigate. They were, the officer commanding the Third Cavalry, the Brigadier commanding the Station, and the General commanding the Division. All three were resident in Meerut. It is not to be questioned that when a regiment breaks into mutiny, the place of the commanding officer, for life or for death, is in the midst of it. Not until all hope has gone can there be any excuse for his departure. As the captain of a blazing vessel at sea is ever the last to leave the quarter-deck and to let himself down the side of his ship, so the commandant of a regiment in the fire of revolt should cling to it as long as the semblance of a regiment remains, and the safety of others can be aided by his presence. When, therefore, intelligence reached Colonel Smyth that the troopers of his regiment had broken into mutiny, it was his duty to proceed at once to the Cavalry Lines. But he did not go near the Lines.* He went to the

Conduct
of Colonel
Smyth.

* "Most of the officers of the Third Light Cavalry at once proceeded to the lines of their regiment, arming hastily, and ordering their horses to follow; but I have never been able to discover that the officer commanding the corps repaired to his post, or was seen in the lines amongst the men, during the whole of that eventful evening and night; and it would appear that Colonel Smyth was so fortunate as to make

an early escape into the protection of the European military quarter."—*O'Callaghan. Scattered Chapters on the Indian Mutiny.* It should be stated, however, that Colonel Smyth was Field-Officer of the week—a fact upon which he himself has laid considerable stress, as though, in his estimation, it exempted him from all special regard for his own particular regiment.

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Captain
Craigie.

Commissioner's house. He went to the General's; and he went to the Brigadier's. He went everywhere but to his Regiment. From the moment that the troopers broke out into revolt they saw no more of their Colonel. He spent the night with the Headquarters of the Division, where the Rifles and the Carbines and the Field-guns were collected, and never had the least conception all the time of what had become of his men.* But they were not all past hope. That something might have been done to save at least a portion of the regiment we know. Captain Craigie, at the first sound of the tumult, mustered his troop, ordered them to accoutre themselves as for a parade, and when they had mounted, galloped down to the gaol, accompanied by his subaltern, Melville Clarke. They were too late to prevent the rescue of the prisoners; but not to set a grand example. Craigie and Clarke kept their men together, and brought them back, with unbroken discipline, to the parade-ground of the regiment. And during that night many acts of heroic fidelity were written down to the honour of Craigie's troop. They had faith in their Captain. And it has been truly recorded of Craigie and Clarke, that "these gallant Englishmen handled the troop as if mutiny were a crime unknown to their men."†

* Colonel Smyth has published his own account of his proceedings on the evening of the 10th of May: "I went," he says, "first to Mr. Greathed's, gave information to the servants, as Mr. G. was out. . . . I then went on to the General's, and heard that he had just left the house in his carriage; so I galloped on to the Brigadier's. . . . I went on to the Artillery parade, and found the Brigadier already on the ground; and I accompanied him with the troops to the other end of the cantonments, and remained with him all

night, and accompanied him again the next morning with Cavalry, Infantry, and Artillery through the cantonments, and went with the Artillery and Cavalry on the right of the Delhi road," &c. &c.

† Official Report of Mr. Commissioner Williams. The writer states that "Lieutenant Clarke rode out from the head of the troop, and ran his sword through a trooper of the regiment who was insulting an European lady, and Captain Craigie gave the wretch his finishing stroke."

The station was commanded by Colonel Archdale Wilson, Brigadier of Artillery. He was a man of a spare and wiry frame, of active athletic habits, who had ever borne a good character in the splendid regiment to the command of which he had then risen. For some years, when the Head-Quarters of the Artillery had been at Dum-Dum, in the vicinity of Calcutta, he had been Adjutant-General of the regiment, and was thoroughly acquainted with all its details. But he had not seen much active service since his youth, and had never had any grave responsibilities cast upon him. His training had been too purely of a professional character to generate any great capacity for taking in a situation of such magnitude as that which he was now suddenly called upon to confront. But he was not a man, in such a crisis as had then arisen, to look idly on, or to shrink from a forward movement. What he did at the outset was what it became him to do. It was about half-past six when Brigade-Major Whish drove into the Brigadier's compound, and told him that the Native troops had broken into mutiny. Instantly Wilson ordered his horse to be saddled and brought round, and having sent orders to the Artillery and Carabincers to join him there, he galloped to the parade-ground of the Rifles, and finding them on the point of marching for Church, directed their Colonel to dismiss the parade, and to reassemble them as quickly as possible with their arms. This was promptly effected; but there was some delay in supplying the regiment with ball cartridge. The Dragoons had not yet come up. With a strange incapacity to understand the situation, the Commanding Officer had suffered the regiment to be mustered as for an ordinary parade; and the slow process of roll-call had been going on

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Brigadier
Wilson.

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whilst the last hour of daylight was passing away, and the enemy were slaughtering our people with impunity.

Movements
of the
Europeans.

Meanwhile, General Hewitt had appeared on parade, and the Artillery had been brought up to the ground. When Colonel Jones reported that the Rifles were ready for action, Wilson, with the General's sanction, detached one company to the Collector's catcherry to protect the treasure, and another for the protection of the barracks. Taking the other companies, with the Artillery, he marched down upon the Native Infantry Lines, where he expected to find the main body of the mutineers assembled. On or near the parade-ground he was joined by the Carabincers, who had lost their way.* There was now a force ready for action which might have destroyed all the Sepoys in Meerut, if they could have been brought into action with the white soldiers—if, indeed, our people could only have seen the enemy for a little space of time. But the shades of night had now fallen upon the scene. And when, near the Native Infantry huts, the English troops were deployed into line and swept the whole space where it was expected that the mutineers would have been found, not a man was to be seen, either in the Infantry Lines or on the parade-ground; and none knew whether they were gone. But near the Cavalry Lines a few troopers were seen, and the Rifles opened fire upon them. The mutineers fled into a wood or copse at the rear of their huts, and the guns were then unlimbered, and a few harmless rounds of grape fired into the obscurity of the night.

It was plain now that the mutineers were dispersed. The question was, What were they doing?

* Brigadier Wilson did not see of troops were returning to the the Carabincers until the whole body European Lines.

To Wilson it seemed that the mutineers had moved round to the European quarter of the Cantonment; and he therefore recommended the General to move back the brigade for its protection. To this Hewitt, glad to be advised, assented; and the troops set their faces homewards. By this time the moon had risen, and the blazing bungalows of the English officers lit up the scene with a lurid glare. But our troops met only a few unarmed plunderers. The mutineers were not to be seen. What, then, was to be done? It has been often stated that one officer at least answered the question as it ought to have been answered. Captain Rosser, of the Carabineers (so the story runs), offered to lead a squadron of his regiment and a few Horse Artillery guns in pursuit of the enemy along the Delhi road. But the anecdote is one of doubtful authenticity.* It is only certain that the enemy escaped; and that, with the exception of some pickets which were planted on the bridges across the nullah which ran between the European Cantonment and the Native Lines and Sudder Bazaar, the whole of Hewitt's force bivouacked for the night on the European parade-ground.

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And the night was a night of horror such as History has rarely recorded. The brief twilight of the Indian summer had soon passed; and the darkness which fell upon the scene brought out, with terrible distinctness, the blazing work of the incendiary. Everywhere, from the European quarters, from the bungalows of the English officers, from the mess-houses and other public buildings, from the residences of the unofficial Christian community, the flames were seen to rise, many-shaped and many-coloured,

May 10—11.
Terrors of the
night.

* See Appendix for an inquiry into the truth of this story.

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May 10—11.

lighting up the heavy columns of smoke which were suspended in the still sultry air. And ever, as the conflagration spread, and the sight became more portentous, the sounds of the great fiery destruction, the crackling and the crashing of the burning and falling timbers, the roar of the flames, and the shrieks of the horses scorched to death in their stables, mingled with the shouts and yells of the mutineers and the rattling of the musketry which proclaimed the great Christian carnage. The scared inhabitants of the burning buildings—the women and children and non-combatants—sought safety in the gardens and out-houses, whither they were often tracked by the insurgents, and shot down or cut to pieces. Some fled in the darkness, and found asylums in such places as had escaped the fury of the incendiaries. Some were rescued by native servants or soldiers, faithful among the faithless, who, in memory of past kindnesses, strove to save the lives of their white masters at the peril of their own.

Escape of
the Com-

Among those who were thus saved were Hervey Greathed, the Commissioner, and his wife. Warned of the approaching danger, first by an officer of the Third Cavalry, and then by a pensioned Afghan chief, he had taken his wife, and some other English-women who had sought safety with him, to the terraced roof of his house; but the insurgents, after driving off his guard, applied the firebrand to the lower part of the building, plundered the rooms, and then surrounded the place. With the flames raging beneath him, and the enemy raging around him, his position was one of deadly peril. And Greathed and his companions must have perished miserably but for the fidelity of one of those Native servants upon whom so much depended in the crisis which

was then threatening our people. With rare presence of mind and fertility of resource he simulated intense sympathy with the rebels. He told them that it was bootless to search the house, as his master had escaped from it, but that, if they would follow him to a little distance, they would find the Feringhees hiding themselves behind a haystack. Fully confiding in the truth of his story, they suffered themselves to be led away from the house; and its inmates descended safely into an empty garden just as the upper rooms were about to "fall in with a tremendous crash."*

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May 10—11.

There were others far less happy on that disastrous Sunday evening. Wives, left without protection whilst their husbands were striving to do their duty in the Lines, were savagely cut to pieces in their burning homes; and little children were massacred beneath the eyes of their mothers. Then delicate English ladies, girt about with fiery danger, death on every side, turned, with a large-hearted sympathy, their thoughts towards their suffering fellow-countrywomen, and tried to rescue them from the threatened doom. In adjacent bungalows were two ladies, wives of officers of the Brigade. One was under special protection, for her husband had endeared himself to the men of his troop by his unflinching kindness and consideration for them. The other, wife of the Adjutant of the Eleventh Regiment, had but recently come from England, and was strange to all the environments of her situation. The more experienced Englishwoman, seeing the danger of her position, and hearing the shrieks which issued from her house, was moved with a great compassion, and sent her servants

Incidents of the night.

Mrs. Craigie.

Mrs. Chambers.

* Mrs. Greathead's Narrative. See also note in Appendix for some account of the gallant and devoted conduct of Syud Meer Khau, an Afghan Pensioner resident at Meerut.

1857. to rescue the affrighted creature from the fury of her
May 10—11. assailants. But when, after some delay, they entered her house, they found her covered with wounds, lying dead upon the floor. Then the insurgents, having done their bloody work, raged furiously against the adjacent bungalow, and were only driven from their purpose by the fidelity of some of Craigie's troopers, who were ready to save the wife of their Captain at the risk of their own lives. In the course of the night, after doing good service, Craigie returned, in fear and trembling, to his household gods, thinking to find them shattered and desecrated; but, by the exceeding mercy of God, safe himself, he found them safe, and soon had matured measures for their escape. Wrapping up the ladies in dark-coloured horse-cloths to conceal their white garments in the glare of the burning station, he led them from the house, and hiding under trees, or in a ruined temple, they passed the night in sleepless horror. Often the voices of bands of mutineers or plunderers in the compound smote upon their ears; but there were help and protection in the presence of a few of Craigie's troopers, who hovered about the place, and in some of his own body-servants, who were equally true to their master. In the early morning the enemy had cleared off, and there was a prospect of escape. So they returned sadly to their dearly-loved home, collected a few cherished articles and some necessary clothing, and went forth from their Paradise with the flaming sword behind them, never again to return. And the leave-takings of that sorrow-laden night were the first of many cruel divulsions, which tore happy families from their homes and sent them forth into the wide world, houseless wanderers and fugitives, with a savage and remorseless enemy yelling behind them in their track.

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Many other episodes of pathetic interest might here be related illustrative of the horrors of that night, if historical necessity did not forbid such amplitude of detailed recital. The sweepings of the gaols and the scum of the Bazaars—all the rogues and ruffians of Meerut, convicted and unconvicted, and the robber-tribes of the neighbouring villages—were loose in the Cantonment, plundering and destroying wherever an English bungalow was to be gutted and burnt. The Sepoys had left the work, which they had commenced, to men who found it truly a congenial task. Day dawned; and those who survived the night saw how thoroughly the work had been done. As they crept from their hiding-places and sought safety in the public buildings protected by the Europeans, they saw, in the mangled corpses which lay by the wayside, in the blackened ruins of the houses which skirted the roads, and in the masses of unmovable property, thrown out of the dwelling-places of the English, and smashed into fragments apparently by blows from heavy clubs, ghastly evidences of the fury of their enemies.* But with the morning light a great quietude had fallen upon the scene. The Sepoys had departed. The ruffians of the gaols and the Bazaars and the Goojur villages had slunk back into their homes. There was little more to be done—nothing more that could be done in the face of the broad day—by these despicable marauders. So our people gathered new heart; and as the sun rose, they thought that our time had come.

* "The inveterate animosity with which the work of destruction was carried out may be judged of by the fact that houses built entirely of masonry, with nothing inflammable except the doors and the beams, which for a considerable height from the ground supported the roofs, formed

of cement, resting on kiln-burnt bricks, were as effectually destroyed as the thatched bungalows. Property which the miscreants could not carry off was thrown out and smashed into fragments, evidently pounded with heavy clubs."—*Report of Commissioner Williams.*

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The day after.

But the Meerut Brigade did nothing more in the clear morning light than it had done in the shadow of the darkness. The English troops, with the English leaders, rose from the bivouac ; and it dawned upon them that more than two thousand mutineers had made their way to Delhi. Even then, if the Carabineers and the Horse Artillery had been let loose, they might, before noon, have reached the imperial city and held mutiny in check. But coteremporary annals record only that the European troops, Horse, Foot, and Artillery, went out for a reconnaissance "on the right of the Delhi road." Not a man was despatched to the place which was the great centre of political intrigue and political danger—which was the great palatial home of the last representative of the House of Timour, and which held a large body of Native troops, and the great magazine of Upper India, unprotected by even a detachment of Europeans. Nor less surprising was it, that, with all these shameful proofs of the great crimes which had been committed, the rising indignation in the breasts of our English leaders did not impel them to inflict terrible retribution upon other criminals. The Bazaars on that Monday morning must have been full of the plundered property of our people, and of many dreadful proofs and signs of complicity in the great crime of the preceding night. Retribution might have fallen on many of the murderers red-handed ; but not a regiment was let loose upon the guilty quarter. The murdered bodies were collected and laid out in the Theatre, where a mimic tragedy was to have been performed that evening ; and the slayers of women and children, and the desecrators of our homesteads, were suffered to enjoy unmolested the fruits of their work ; *

* * It is a terrible thing that, work in every direction, though with the dreadful proof of the night's groups of savages were actually

whilst the Meerut Brigade, Horse, Foot, and Artillery, marched about Cantonments, and looked at the Delhi road along which the mutineers had made good their escape.*

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What might have been done by our people to overtake the guilty actors in the tragedy of that Sunday night, and to strike awe into the hearts of all who were minded to follow in the same track, may be gathered from an individual example, the record of which lies before me. It has been narrated how Mrs. Chambers, wife of the Adjutant of the Eleventh, was foully murdered in her bungalow. One of her husband's friends, Lieutenant Möller of the same regiment, obtained soon afterwards what appeared to be good evidence that a certain butcher of the Great Bazaar was the assassin. On this he started in his buggy for the Bazaar, tracked out the guilty man, seized him, and carried him back to cantonments with a loaded pistol at his head. A drum-head court-martial was assembled, and whilst Chambers lay in convulsions in an adjoining room, the wretch was tried, found guilty, and sentenced to be hanged. And in a little while his lifeless body was swinging from the branch of a mango-tree.† There may, at this time, have been other examples of individual courage and resolution of the same stern character, as there were afterwards in all parts of the disturbed country; but the arm of authority was not uplifted to strike, and the multitude of criminals escaped.

seen gloating over the mangled and mutilated remains of the victims, the column did not take immediate vengeance on the Sudder Bazaar and its environs, crowded as the whole place was with wretches hardly concealing their fiendish satisfaction, and when there were probably few houses from which plundered property might not have been recovered. But the men

were restrained; the bodies were collected and placed in the theatre, in which a Dramatic Tragedy would have been enacted, but for the real and awful one which occurred the night before."—*Report of Commissioner Williams.*

* See statement of Colonel Smyth, quoted *ante*, page 64, note.

† This was on the 14th of May.

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Indeed, wheresoever a number of Englishmen are gathered together there will surely be deeds of gallantry, many and great, though they may be obliterated by the hand of death or lost in the confusion of the hour. And Meerut saw many acts of personal bravery done by our people which will never perhaps find sufficient record.* Nor should it be forgotten that many noble instances of gratitude and generosity, or it might perhaps have been only of common humanity, were apparent in the conduct of the Natives, who, whilst their brethren were striking, put forth their hands to save, and risked their own lives to protect those of the people whose only crime it was that they had white faces.†

* "The firm bearing of the Deputy-Assistant Commissary-General, who stood by his office till his house was in flames, and a young officer rushed in with his lower jaw shattered by a musket-ball, and it was evident that the mutinous guard would abstain no longer; the gallant resistance of the Executive Engineer, Grand Trunk Road; the courage with which at least one woman attacked and wounded her assailants—these and many other instances of the fortitude with which our countrymen and countrywomen met the unexpected onslaught, deserve notice, but cannot be detailed in such a narrative."—*Report of Mr.*

Commissioner Williams. Unpublished Correspondence.

† "Two Sepoys of the Eleventh Native Infantry most carefully escorted two ladies, with children, to the Dragoon Barracks. A Mahomedan in the city sheltered two Christian families, when the act was not only a singular deviation from the general conduct of his sect, but one full of danger to himself. A female servant and washerman succeeded in saving the young children of a lady, whom also they were attempting to save veiled in Native clothes, when a ruffian drew open the veil, saw the pale face, and cut the poor mother to pieces."—*Ibid.*

CHAPTER III.

THE MEERUT MUTINEERS AT DELHI—EVENTS AT THE PALACE—PROGRESS OF INSURRECTION—STATE OF THE BRITISH CANTONMENT—MUTINY OF THE DELHI REGIMENTS—THE EXPLOSION OF THE MAGAZINE—ESCAPE OF THE BRITISH OFFICERS—MASSACRE OF THE PRISONERS.

WHILST the Meerut Brigade were bivouacking on the great parade-ground, the troopers of the Third Cavalry, scarcely drawing rein on the way, were pricking on, in hot haste, all through the moonlit night for Delhi. And the foot regiments were toiling on laboriously behind them, making rapid progress under the impulse of a great fear. It is hard to believe that on that Sabbath evening a single Native soldier had discharged his piece without a belief, in his inmost heart, that he was going straight to martyrdom. A paroxysm of suicidal insanity was upon them. They were in a great passion of the Present, and were reckless of the Future. But the sound of the carbines and the rifles and the roar of the guns, with their deadly showers of grape and canister, must have been ringing in their ears, and they must have felt that they were lost hopelessly. And now, as they speeded onwards in the broad moonlight, they must have listened for the noise of the pursuing Dragoons, and must have felt, in their panic flight, that the Europeans would soon be upon them. But hour after hour passed, and there was no sound of pursuit; and soon after break of day they saw the waters of the

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The ride to
Delhi.

1857. Jumna glittering in the morning sun, and the great
May 11. City of Refuge rose encouragingly before them. Before eight o'clock, the foremost troopers had crossed the river by the bridge of boats, had cut down the toll-keeper, had fired the toll-house, had slain a solitary Englishman who was returning to Delhi across the bridge; and under the windows of the King's Palace they were now clamouring for admittance, calling upon his Majesty for help, and declaring that they had killed the English at Meerut and had come to fight for the Faith.

At the
Palace.

Hearing their cry, the King summoned to his presence Captain Douglas, the Commandant of the Palace Guards. In the Hall of Audience, supporting his tottering limbs with a staff, the aged monarch met the English Captain. Douglas said that he would descend and speak to the troopers; but the King implored him not to go, lest his life should be sacrificed, and laying hold of one of his hands, whilst Ahsan-oollah, the King's physician, took the other, imperatively forbade him to go down to the gate. Then Douglas went out on a balcony and told the troopers to depart, as their presence was an annoyance to the King. He might as well have spoken to the winds. Baffled at one point, they made good their entrance at another. It was in vain to tell them to close the gates, there were so many; and the Guards were not to be trusted. It happened that the Thirty-eighth Sepoy Regiment was then on duty in the city—that regiment which had successfully defied the Government when it had been designed to send it across the Black Water.* Already were they prepared to cast in their lot with the mutineers. The Calcutta Gate was the nearest to the bridge of boats; but when this was closed, the

* See *ante*, vol. i. pages 461, 462.

troopers made their way along the road that runs between the palace walls and the river to the Rajghat Gate, which was opened to them by the Mahomedans of the Thaubā-Bazaar, and they clattered into the town.

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Then ensued a scene of confusion which it is difficult to describe. Cutting down every European they could find, and setting fire to their houses, they doubled back towards the Calcutta Gate, where they learnt that Commissioner Fraser, Douglas of the Palace Guards, and other leading Englishmen would be found. As they rode on, with the cry of "Deen-Deen!" they were followed by an excited Mahomedan rabble. The citizens closed their shops in amazement and terror, and from one end of Delhi to the other, as the news ran along the streets, there was sore bewilderment and perplexity, and everybody looked for the coming of the pursuing Englishmen, and feared that they would inflict a terrible retribution upon the city that had harboured the guilty fugitives. But no English regiments were coming to the rescue. And these maddened Native troopers, with such vile followers as they could gather up in the streets of Delhi, were now masters of the city. They knew that throughout all the Sepoy regiments in cantonments there was not a man who would pull a trigger, or draw a sword, or light a port-fire in defence of his English officer. Without a fear, therefore, they rushed on, scenting the English blood, eager for the larger game, and ever proclaiming as they went glory to the Padishah and death to the Feringhees.

Progress of
the Insurrec-
tion.

Whilst the Meerut mutineers were coming up from the farther end of the long line of palace buildings, Commissioner Fraser at the other end was vainly endeavouring to secure the loyalty of the Sepoy Guards.

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Captain Douglas also had gone forth on the same vain errand. But it was soon clear that they were powerless. The troopers came upon them, and the Thirty-eighth, heedless of Fraser's appeals, fraternised with the new comers. Words now were nothing; authority was nothing. In the face of that surging multitude, increasing in numbers and in fury every moment, the English gentlemen felt that they carried their lives in their hands. When the leading troopers galloped up, Fraser and Douglas were in a buggy together; but seeing the danger that beset them, they descended and made for the gate of the civil guard-house, or police-station, where other Englishmen joined them. Taking a musket from one of the Guards, Fraser shot the foremost of the troopers dead, and those who followed, seeing their comrade drop, fell back a little space; but the multitude behind pressed on, and it was soon apparent that safety was to be found only in flight. Fraser then re-entered his buggy and drove for the Lahore Gate of the Palace, whilst Douglas flung himself into the ditch of the Fort, and though severely injured by the fall, thus sheltered from the fire of the enemy, crept towards the Palace Gate. Some Chuprassies of the Palace Guard, who had followed him, lifted him up, almost powerless from the injuries he had received, and one of them took the Captain on his shoulders and carried him into the Palace. Presently Fraser and Hutchinson, the Collector, who had been wounded at the commencement of the affray, arrived also at the Palace.*

* All this is necessarily given upon native evidence, adduced at the trials of the King of Delhi and Mughal Beg. In some respects the statements are contradictory. One witness says that Mr. Hutchinson

other, that he arrived with Mr. Fraser. A third says, that as soon as Captain Douglas was able to speak, he ordered his Chuprassies to search for Mr. Hutchinson and bring him into the Palace.

In the apartments occupied by Captain Douglas, there were then residing, as his guests, Mr. Jennings, the English Chaplain, Miss Jennings, his daughter, and a young lady named Clifford, a friend of the latter. Mr. Jennings had from an early hour of the morning been watching through a telescope the advance of the Meerut mutineers, and he knew that there was mischief in the wind. Hearing a noise, he went below, and found that Captain Douglas had just been brought in and placed on a stone-seat in a lower Court. Under his directions, Douglas and Hutchinson were carried by some of the Palace Guards up the staircase to the apartments over the gateway,* whilst Fraser remained below, endeavouring to allay the excitement. Standing at the foot of the stairs, with a sword in his hand, the last-named was addressing a noisy crowd, when a man named Moghul Beg, an orderly of the Palace Guards, rushed upon him and clove his cheek to the bone.† The others followed up the attack, cutting at him with their swords, and presently Simon Fraser, Commissioner, lay a corpse at the foot of the stairs.

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Murder of
Mr. Fraser.

Meanwhile, in the upper rooms, Douglas and Hutchinson were lying in grievous pain, and the Jennings family were ministering to them. The excited crowd, having murdered the Commissioner, now rushed up the staircase, eager for the blood of the other English gentlemen. An attempt was made to

Murder of the
Jenningses.

* Some statements are to the effect that Mr. Jennings and Mr. Hutchinson carried Douglas up-stairs.

† Here, again, there is discordant evidence. On the trial of the King, it was more than once stated that the first blow was struck by one Hodjee, a lapidary or seal-engraver, who (according to one witness) "inflicted a deep and mortal wound on

the right side of his neck." But at the trial of Moghul Beg, five years afterwards (1862), it was stated by one Baktawuss Sing that he "saw the prisoner inflict the first wound which was on Mr. Fraser's face." Another witness, Kishun Singh, also stated, "I saw the prisoner strike the first blow." See further statements in the Appendix.

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close the doors at the head of the staircases, but the murderous gang forced their way upwards, streamed into the rooms where Douglas, Hutchinson, Jennings, and the innocent young Englishwomen were listening with dismay to the tumult below, and, before a prayer could be lifted up, had massacred them with exultant ferocity. It was quickly done. A brief and bloody murder, terrible to contemplate, then stained the Delhi Palace; but no circumstances of shameful outrage aggravated the horror of the deed.*

There was then a scene of fearful uproar and confusion, which filled the old King with bewilderment and terror. The murderers, with their blood-stained swords in their hands, went about boasting of their crimes, and calling upon others to follow their example. The court-yards and the corridors of the Palace were swarming with the mutineers of the Third Cavalry and of the Thirty-eighth, and soon the Meerut Infantry Regiments† began to swell the dangerous crowd, whilst an excited Mahomedan rabble mingled with the Sepoys and the Palace Guards. The troopers stabled their horses in the Courts of the Palace. The foot-men, weary with the long night march, turned the Hall of Audience into a barrack, and littered down on the floor. Guards were posted all about the Palace. And the wretched, helpless King found that his royal dwelling-house was in military occupation.

* It was stated, and for some time believed, that the English ladies had been dragged before the King, and either murdered in his presence or by his orders, and some highly dramatic incidents have been published illustrative of this complicity of the Mogul in the first murders. But there is not the least foundation for these stories. On the other hand,

it is on evidence that Captain Douglas, shortly before his death, sent a message to the King, requesting him to send palanquins to remove the ladies to the Queen's apartments, and that he did so—but too late.

† There is considerable diversity of statement relating to the hour at which the Meerut Infantry Regiments arrived.

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May 11.

Whilst these events were passing within the precincts of the Palace, in the quarter of the city most inhabited by the English residents, the work of carnage and destruction was proceeding apace. It is not easy to fix the precise hour at which each particular incident in the dreadful catalogue of crime and suffering occurred. But it seems to have been under the meridian sun that the principal unofficial Englishmen in Delhi fell victims to the fury of the enemy. About noon the Delhi Bank was attacked and plundered, and all its chief servants, after a brave resistance, massacred. Mr. Beresford, the manager of the Bank, took refuge with his wife and family on the roof of one of the outbuildings. And there, for some time, they stood at bay, he with a sword in his hand, ready to strike, whilst his courageous help-mate was armed with a spear. Thus, with resolute bravery, they defended the gorge of the staircase, until the assailants, seeing no hope of clearing the passage, retired to scale the walls in the rear of the house. The attack was then renewed, but still the little party on the roof made gallant resistance. It is related by an eye-witness that one man fell dead beneath the lady's spear. But to resist was but to protract the pains of death. They were overpowered and killed, and the Bank was gutted from floor to roof. The Delhi Press establishment shared the same fate. The Christian compositors had gathered there, in pursuance of their craft; and never, perhaps, since the first dawn of printing, had work been done, sadder and grimmer than this—for it was theirs to record in type that the hand of death was upon them. The telegraph had brought in the early morning tidings that the Meerut mutineers were hastening to Delhi, and would soon be at the city gates. Some

The Delhi
Bank

The Delhi
Press.

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must have felt then that they were composing their own death-warrants. The little slips of printed paper—Delhi Gazette “Extras”—went forth, and the printers remained to meet the crisis, which they had just announced. About mid-day a crowd of Insurgents rushed into the office, killed all the Christian compositors, who could not effect their escape, and with clubs and poles destroyed the house and its contents, taking away all the type that they could carry, to turn to another and a deadlier use. Everywhere the Christian people were butchered, their property was plundered or destroyed, and then their houses were fired.* The Church was an especial object of the fury of the insurgents. They gloated over the desecration of all that was held in reverence by our Christian people. They tore down and shattered the monumental slabs on the walls; they seized the sacramental plate; then they ascended to the belfry, rang a peal in derision, and, loosening or cutting the ropes, let the bells fall with a crash on the stones below.

in
Cantonments.

Meanwhile, there was great excitement in the British Cantonments, where the Sepoy regiments of the Company were posted. Our military force was cantoned on a Ridge overlooking the great city, at a distance of about two miles from it. There had during the preceding week been no symptoms of inquietude

* “Private houses were entered by troopers (their horses being held at the gates of the gardens), who said they did not come for loot but for fire, and when they were disappointed in their greed for European life, they let in the backsmen of the city, who, in the space of half an hour,

cleared out the best-regulated houses from punkah to floor-cloth. They then either set fire to the house, or, if it were not of an inflammable nature, they pulled out the doors and window-frames, &c., in some cases the beams from the roofs.”—*Mr. Wagenseider's Narrative.*

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among them. Some Native officers from the Delhi regiments had been sitting on the great Meerut Court-Martial; but how far they sympathised with the prisoners cannot be confidently declared. It would have been strange, however, if what had happened at Barrackpore and Berhampore had not been discussed at Meerut, and if the Native officers had not carried back with them that uneasy feeling of the something coming which was rapidly spreading from station to station. It is certain, however, that on the afternoon of the Christian Sabbath, which saw at Meerut the first great baptism of blood, a carriage arrived in the Delhi cantonments full of Natives, who, though not in regimental uniform, were known to be Sepoys from Meerut.* What was said or done in the Lines on that evening and during the ensuing night can only be conjectured. But the following morning found every regiment ripe for revolt.

At the early sunrise parade of that day all the troops in the Delhi Cantonments—the Thirty-eighth, the Fifty-fourth, and Seventy-fourth Regiments, with the Native Artillery—were assembled to hear the proceedings of the Court-Martial on Issuree Pandey, the Barrackpore Jemadar† read aloud; and as they were read, there arose from the assembled Sepoys a murmur of disapprobation. There was nothing beyond this; but some officers in Cantonments, who had been eagerly watching the signs of the times, felt that a crisis was approaching. At the early breakfast, however, where our officers met each other, after morning parade, at mess-houses or private bungalows, there was the wonted amount of light-hearted conversation and careless laughter. And when they separated, and

* See evidence of Captain Tytler at the trial of the King of Delhi.

† Issuree Pandey had been hanged on April 23rd.—*Asse* vol. 1., p. 584.

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May 11. each man went to his home to bathe and dress, and prepare for the larger breakfast and the business or the pleasure of the morning, it was not thought that the day would differ from other days. But before the work of the toilet was at an end, our people were startled by the tidings that the Native Cavalry from Meerut were forcing their way into the city. Native servants and Sepoy orderlies carried the news to their officers, and every man hurried on his clothes, feeling that there was work before him. But even then the prevailing idea was that there had been an escape from gaol; no more. No one thought that there was danger to an Empire. If, it was said, the troops at Meerut had mutinied, the strong body of Europeans there—the Rifles, the Carabincers, and the white Artillery—would surely have been upon their track. It was not possible that more than a few fugitives could ever reach Delhi.

Colonel Rip-
ley and the
Fifty-fourth.

So argued our officers on the Delhi Ridge, as they listened to the bugle-call and buckled on their swords. The Fifty-fourth were ordered out for service, and two of De Tessier's guns were to accompany them to the city. It was necessarily a work of time to get the field-pieces ready for action; so Ripley, leaving two companies to escort the Artillery, marched down to the nearest gate. This was the Cashmere Gate. A little way on the other side of it was the Main-guard, at which some men of the Thirty-eighth were posted. They had already in their hearts cast in their lot with the mutineers, and when Ripley appeared with the Fifty-fourth, the time for action had come, and they throw off then the last remnant of disguise. The troopers of the Third Cavalry, with the insurgent rabble from the town, were surging onwards towards the gate. The Fifty-fourth, who had brought down

their pieces unloaded, now received the order to load; and meanwhile, Captain Wallace, acting as field-officer of the day, who had taken command of the Main-guard, ordered the Thirty-eighth to fire upon the mutineers. To this they responded only with insulting sneers. Not a man brought his musket to the "present."

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This was the turning-point of the great disaster. The Fifty-fourth were scarcely less faithless than their comrades. They fired in the air, and some, perhaps, fired upon their officers.* After shooting two of the insurgents, Ripley was cut down, and near him fell also the lifeless bodies of Smith and Burrowes, Edwards and Waterfield. When the two companies in the rear approached the Cashmere Gate with the guns, they met Captain Wallace riding in hot haste towards them; he begged them, for mercy's sake, to hurry on, as the troopers were shooting down our officers. Soon they had ghastly evidence of this dismal truth, for the mangled body of their Colonel was being brought out, "literally hacked to pieces." Paterson then ordered his men to load, and pushed on with all speed to the gate. But the report of the approach of the guns had already awed the mutineers, and when they passed the gate, our officers found no trace of the enemy whom they had come to attack, except in the receding figures of a few troopers, who were scampering towards the city. But they found most miserable traces of the preceding conflict, in the dead bodies of their comrades, which were scattered about the place. These were now brought in to the Main-guard, before which the guns had been planted,

* There seems to be some doubt about the conduct of the Fifty-fourth in this first collision. It is stated, however, that Colonel Ripley declared that his own men had bayoneted him.

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and the two companies of the Fifty-fourth posted as a garrison. And there they remained hour after hour, gaining no assured intelligence of the movements of the rebels, and ever cheerful in the thought that aid from Meerut, with its strong European force, must certainly be close at hand.

Major Abbott
and the
Seventy-
fourth.

Meanwhile, Captain Wallace had been directed by Major Paterson to bring up the Seventy-fourth Regiment, with two more guns. Major Abbott, on gaining intelligence of the defection of the Thirty-eighth, and the doubtful conduct of the Fifty-fourth, mounted his horse, hastened to the Lines of his regiment, and addressed his men. He told them that the time had come for them to prove that they were true and loyal soldiers; and he called for volunteers to accompany him down to the Cashmere Gate. There was not a man there who did not come to the front; and when the order was given to load, they obeyed it with befitting alacrity. Then they marched down, with two more guns, under Lieutenant Aislachie, and about mid-day were welcomed by Paterson and his party at the Main-guard. The force at this post had now been strengthened by the return of some Sepoys of the Fifty-fourth, who had gone off in the confusion, and, having roamed about for some time in a state of bewilderment and panic, had at last turned back to the point from which they had started, hanging on to the skirts of circumstance, wondering what would be the result, and waiting to see whether a retributive force from Meerut was sweeping into the City of the Mogul.

At the Main-
guard.

Time passed, and the slant shadows thrown by the descending sun were falling upon the Main-guard. Yet still no authentic intelligence of what was passing in the city reached our expectant officers, except that which was conveyed to them by European

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fugitives who sought safety there from other parts of the city. Scared and bewildered they had come in, each with some story of an escape from death, providential—almost miraculous. But there was little room for rejoicing, as it seemed to them that they had been saved from old dangers only to encounter new. At the Main-guard they were surrounded by Sepoys, waiting only a fitting opportunity to disencumber themselves of the last remnant of their outward fidelity. At any moment they might break out into open revolt, and shoot down the Europeans of both sexes congregated in the enclosure. It was a time of intense anxiety. It was evident that the insurrection was raging in the city. There was a confused roar, presaging a great tumult, and smoke and fire were seen ascending from the European quarter.

Then there was, at intervals, a sound of Artillery, the meaning of which was not correctly known, and then a tremendous explosion, which shook the Main-guard to its very foundation. Looking to the quarter whence the noise proceeded, they saw a heavy column of smoke obscuring the sky; and there was no doubt in men's minds that the great Magazine had exploded—whether by accident or design could only be conjectured. But whilst the party in the guard-house were speculating on the event, two European officers joined them, one of whom was so blackened with smoke that it was difficult to discern his features. They were Artillery subalterns, who had just escaped from the great explosion. The story which it was theirs to tell is one which will never be forgotten.

The great Delhi Magazine, with all its vast supplies of munitions of war, was in the city at no great

Explosion
the Magazin

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distance from the Palace. It was in charge of Lieutenant George Willoughby, of the Ordnance Commissariat Department, with whom were associated Lieutenants Forrest and Raynor, also officers of the Bengal Artillery, and six European Conductors and Commissariat Sergeants. All the rest of the establishment was Native. Early morning work is a condition of Anglo-Indian life, and Willoughby was at the Magazine superintending the accustomed duties of his department, and little dreaming what the day would bring forth, when Forrest came in accompanied by the magistrate, Sir Thomas Metcalfe, and informed him that the Meerut mutineers were streaming across the river. It was Metcalfe's object to obtain from the Magazine a couple of guns wherewith to defend the Bridge. But it was soon apparent that the time for such defence had passed. The troopers had crossed the river, and had found ingress at the Palace Gate. A brave and resolute man, who, ever in the midst of danger, seemed almost to bear a charmed life, Metcalfe then went about other work, and Willoughby braced himself up for the defence of the Magazine. He knew how much depended on its safety. He knew that not only the mutinous soldiery, but the dangerous classes of Delhi, would pour down upon the Magazine, some eager to seize its accumulated munitions of war, others greedily only for plunder. If, he thought, he could hold out but a little while, the white regiments at Meerut would soon come to his aid, and a strong guard of English Riflemen with guns manned by European artillerymen, would make the Magazine secure against all comers. It was soon plain that the Native establishment of the Magazine was not to be trusted. But there were nine resolute Englishmen who calmly prepared themselves to face the tremen-

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dous odds which threatened them, and, if the sacrifice were required, to die beneath the ruins of the Magazine. Cheered by the thought of the approaching succour from Meerut, these brave men began their work. The outer gates were closed and barricaded. Guns were then brought out, loaded with double charges of grape, and posted within the gates. One of the Nine, with port-fire in hand, stood ready to discharge the contents of the six-pounders full upon the advancing enemy if they should find their way into the enclosure. These arrangements completed, a train was laid from the powder-magazine, and on a given signal from Willoughby, if further defence should be hopeless, a match was to be applied to it, and the Magazine blown into the air.

Whilst in this attitude of defence, a summons to surrender came to them in the name of the King. It was treated with contemptuous silence. Again and again messengers came from the Palace saying that his Majesty had ordered the gates to be opened, and the stores given up to the Army. If not, ladders would be sent, and the Magazine would be carried by escalade. Unmoved by these menaces, Willoughby and Forrest answered nothing, but looked to their defences; and presently it was plain that the scaling-ladders had arrived. The enemy were swarming over the walls. At this point all the natives in the Magazine, the gun-lascars, the artificers and others whose defection had been expected, threw off their disguise, and, ascending some sloping sheds, joined the enemy on the other side.

The time for vigorous action had now arrived. As the enemy streamed over the walls, round after round of murderous grape-shot from our guns, delivered with all the coolness and steadiness of a practice-

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parade, riddled the advancing multitudes; but still they poured on, keeping up a heavy fire of musketry from the walls.* Yet hoping almost against hope to hear the longed-for sound of the coming help from Meerut, the devoted Englishmen held their ground until their available ammunition was expended. Then further defence was impossible; they could not leave the guns to bring up shot from the Magazine, and there were none to help them. Meanwhile, the mutineers were forcing their way at other unprotected points into the great enclosure, and it was plain that the Nine—two among them wounded, though not disabled, for the strong will kept them at their posts—could no longer hold the great storehouse from the grasp of the enemy. So the signal was given. Conductor Scully fired the train. In a few seconds there was a tremendous explosion. The Magazine had been blown into the air.

Not one of that gallant band expected to escape with his life. But four of the Nine, in the confusion which ensued, though at first stunned and bewildered, shattered and bruised, made good their retreat from the ruins. Willoughby and Forrest, it has been seen, escaped to the Main-guard. Raynor and Buckley took a different direction, and eventually reached Meerut. Scully and his gallant comrades were never seen alive again. But the lives thus nobly sacrificed were dearly paid for by the enemy. Hundreds perished in that great explosion; and others at a distance were struck down by the fragments of the building, or by bullets flung from the cartridges ignited in store. But it was not possible that by any such explosion as this the immense material resources

* The residents appear to have Eleven and Twentieth Regiments been principally Sepoys of the from Meerut.

of the great Delhi Magazine should be so destroyed as to be unserviceable to the enemy. The effect of the heroic deed, which has given to those devoted Nine a cherished place in History, can never be exactly computed. But the grandeur of the conception is not to be measured by its results. From one end of India to another it filled men's minds with enthusiastic admiration; and when news reached England that a young Artillery officer named Willoughby had blown up the Delhi Magazine, there was a burst of applause that came from the deep heart of the nation. It was the first of many intrepid acts which have made us proud of our countrymen in India; but its brilliancy has never been eclipsed.

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In the British Cantonment on the Ridge a column of white smoke was seen to arise from the city, and presently the sound of the explosion was heard. It was then four o'clock. Brigadier Graves and the officers under him had been exerting themselves to keep together such of the troops as had not marched down to the Delhi City, ever hoping that the Europeans from Meerut would soon come to their relief, and wondering why they were so long in making their appearance. It seemed strange, but it was possible, that the extent of the danger was not appreciated by General Howitt; strange that it should be necessary to send for succours to Meerut, and yet, as the day advanced and no help came, it clearly had become necessary to appeal for the aid which ought to have been freely and promptly sent. Then one brave man stepped forward and offered to carry a letter to the General at Meerut. This was Doctor Batson, the Surgeon of the Seventy-fourth Regiment. The gallant

Progress of
mutiny in
Cantonments.

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offer was accepted. The letter was written, and placed in Batson's hands. He took leave of his wife and children, whom he might never see again, disguised himself as a Fakeer, and set forth on his perilous journey. But well as he played his part, and able as he was to speak the language of the country as fluently as his own, he had not proceeded far before his disguise was penetrated; the colour of his eyes had betrayed him. He was fired upon by the Sepoys, robbed and stripped by the villagers, and finally cast adrift, to wander about naked and hungry, weary and footsore, passing through every kind of peril, and enduring every kind of pain.

All day long the Sepoys in the Cantonment had been hovering upon the brink of open mutiny. They had committed no acts of violence against their officers, but, like their comrades at the Main-guard, though held back by the fear of the white regiments that were expected from Meerut, they were festering with the bitterness of national hatred, and eager to strike. The ladies and children had been gathered up and sheltered in a place known as the Flag-staff Tower.* There two of De Tessier's guns were posted; but the Native gunners were not to be trusted, and besides the officers, there were only nineteen Euro-

* This Flagstaff tower became afterwards very celebrated in the history of the siege of Delhi. On that 11th of May it was little better than a "Black Hole." The scene within the tower is thus described by an eye-witness:—"Here we found a large number of ladies and children collected in a round room some eighteen feet in diameter. Servants, male and female, were huddled together with them; many ladies were in a fainting condition from extreme heat and nervous excitement, and all wore

that expression of anxiety so near akin to despair. Here were widows mourning their husbands' murder, sisters weeping over the report of a brother's death, and some there were whose husbands were still on duty in the midst of the disaffected Sepoys, of whose fate they were as yet ignorant. It was a black hole in miniature, with all but the last horrible features of that dreadful prison, and I was glad even to stand in the sun to catch a breath of fresh air."

—*Mr. Wagentreiber's Narrative.*

peans, or Christians, in the Cantonment. It was felt that at any moment a crisis might arrive, when nothing but a sudden flight could save the lives of this little handful of our people. The explosion of the Magazine seems to have brought on the inevitable moment, when the last links that bound the Native soldiery to their European officers were to be broken.

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At the Main-guard in the City, as in the Cantonment on the Ridge, the same process was going on in the light of the setting sun. The disaffection of the Delhi regiments had ripened into general mutiny. The last restraints were flung aside under an assumed conviction that the Europeans from Meerut were not coming to avenge their slaughtered brethren. The great national cause was swelling into portentous external dimensions under the inflations of the King and Princes, and others of stronger lungs than their own. Everywhere it had been noised about from early morning that the King was on the side of the mutineers, and that to fight against the English was to fight for the King—to fight for the restoration of the Mogul throne—to fight for the religion of the Prophet. And as the day advanced, there were more unmistakable signs that this was neither an invention nor a delusion. The inmates of the Palace, timid, feeble, effete as they were, had plainly risen against the dominant Christian power. The yoke of the Feringhees was to be cast off. The time had come when all the great offices of State would again be filled by the people of the East—by Mahomedans and Hindoos, under the restored dynasty of the Moguls. And whilst many were inspired by these sentiments, many also were moved by a great lust of plunder; and as the sun neared the horizon, and still there

Events at the
Main-guard.

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were no signs of the avenging Englishmen on the road from Meerut, massacre and spoliation were safe and easy, and all the scum of Delhi, therefore, was seen upon the surface of the rebellion.

To hold out any longer against such overwhelming odds was now wholly impossible. At the Main-guard the massacre of our people was commenced by a volley from the Thirty-eighth, delivered with terrible effect into the midst of them. Gordon, the field-officer of the day, fell from his horse with a musket-ball in his body, and died without a groan. Smith and Reveley of the Seventy-fourth, were shot dead.* That any Christian person escaped amidst the shower of musketry that was poured upon them seemed to be a miraculous deliverance. There was now nothing left to the survivors but to seek safety in flight. There was but one means of escape, and that a perilous, almost a hopeless, one. There was an embrasure in the bastion skirting the court-yard of the Main-guard, through which egress might be obtained, and by dropping down into the ditch—a fall of some thirty feet—and ascending the opposite scarp, the slope of the glacis might be gained, beyond which there was some jungle, which might afford cover to the fugitives till nightfall. Young and active officers, not crippled by wounds, might accomplish this; but the despairing cries of some Englishwomen from the inner rooms of the Guard-house, reminded them that they could not think wholly of themselves. To remain in the Guard was to court death. The mutineers were not only firing upon our people with their muskets, but pointing their guns at us. The only hope left was a

* "The latter (Reveley) had a loaded gun in his hand; he quietly raised himself up with a dying effort, and discharging both barrels into a knot of Sepoys below, the next moment expired."—*Lieutenant Fiebert's Narrative.*

descent into the ditch, but even that was more like despair. So the women were brought to the embrasure, and whilst in terror and confusion they were discussing the possibility of the descent, a round-shot passed over their heads, and they felt that there was not a moment to be lost. The officers then fastened their belts together, and thus aided, whilst some dropped into the ditch to receive the women, others helped them from above to descend. At last, not without much difficulty, aggravated by the terror of the poor creatures who were being rescued, the whole were lowered into the ditch; and then came the still more difficult task of ascending the opposite bank. The steepness of the ascent and the instability of the soil made their footing so insecure, that again and again they were foiled in the attempt to reach the summit. The earth gave way beneath them, and helping men and helpless women rolled back to the bottom of the ditch amidst a shower of crumbling earth. Despair, however, gave them superhuman energy, and at last the whole of our little party had surmounted the outer slope of the ditch, and were safe upon the crest of the glacis. Then they made their way into the jungle which skirted it, and pushed on, some in the direction of the Cantonments, and some in the direction of Metcalfe House.

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Meanwhile, in the British Cantonment on the Ridge our people had been reduced to the same extremity of despair. The Sepoys had turned upon them and now held possession of the guns. It was no longer possible to defend the place or to keep together even the few Native soldiers who were inclined to remain faithful, under the influence of old

Escape from
Cantonments.

1857. habits and personal attachments. Two circumstances,
 May 11. however, were in favour of the English in Cantonments. One was, that the Sepoys at a distance from the Palace and the City were less acquainted with the extent to which the Royal Family and the Mahomedan citizens of Delhi were aiding and supporting the mutineers. The other was, that our officers, being at their homes, had facilities of conveyance—horses, and carriages, and carts—wherewith to carry off their families to Meerut or Kurnaul, with some provisions for the journey, and perhaps some of the remnant of their household gods. When first they moved off, there was a slight show or pretence of the Sepoys going with them. They fell in to the word of command, and, for a little space, accompanied the departing Englishmen; but soon the columns were broken up, the Sepoys streamed into the Bazaars, and all semblance of discipline was abandoned. Three or four officers, who had remained with them, tried to rally their men in vain. The Sepoys implored them to escape before the rabble from the city burst upon the Cantonment. Already, indeed, the English carriages had been lighted upon their way by the blaze of our burning bungalows. If the officers who were the last to quit the Cantonment could rescue the regimental colours, it was the most that they could hope to accomplish.*

The flight
 from Delhi.

So, forth from the Cantonment and forth from the City went our fugitive people. Many narratives of deep and painful interest have been written, descriptive of the sufferings which they endured, and the dangers which they encountered. It has been nar-

* The last to quit the Cantonment were, apparently, Colonel Knivett of the Thirty-eighth, Lieutenant Gambier, Captain Pelle, and Captain Holland.

rated how they hid themselves now in the jungle, now in the ruins of uninhabited buildings; how they tore off their epaulettes or other bright appendages of their uniform lest they should attract notice by glittering in the moonlight or the sunshine; how they crouched like hares in form, or hid themselves in gaps and hollows; how they were tracked and despoiled by robbers; how they were lured into seemingly friendly villages and then foully maltreated; how they waded through or swam rivers, carrying the women and children across as best they could; how they were beaten and stripped, and sent on their way under the fierce unclouded sun of the Indian summer, without clothing and without food; how they often laid themselves down at night weary, exhausted, and in sore pain, crouching close to each other for warmth, expecting, almost hoping that death would come at once to relieve them from their sufferings; how delicate women and young children struggled on, sometimes separated from their husbands or fathers, but ever finding consolation and support in the kindly and chivalrous ministrations of English gentlemen.* Some made good their way to Meerut, some to Kurnaul, some to Umballah. Others perished miserably on the road, and a few, unable to proceed, were left behind by their companions. This was the sorest trial of all that befel the fugitives. It went to the hearts of these brave men to abandon any of their fellow-sufferers who could not longer share their flight. But there was no help for it. So, once or twice, after vain endeavours to carry the helpless one to a place of safety, it was found that,

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* And nobly the women played their parts, and not always as the weaker vessels. One published narrative relates how two ladies—Mrs. Wood and Mrs. Pelle—saved a wounded officer, the husband of the former, who could not have moved onward without their support.

1857. with the enemy on their track, death to the Many
May 11—12. must follow further efforts to save the One, and so
the wretched creature was left behind to die.*

But truth would not be satisfied if it were not narrated here that many compassionate and kindly acts on the part of the Natives of the country relieved the darkness of the great picture of national crime. Many of the fugitives were succoured by people in the rural districts through which they passed, and sent on their way in safety. In this good work men of all classes, from great landholders to humble sweepers took part, and endangered their own lives by saving those of the hapless Christians.†

May 11—12.
Massacre of
Prisoners.

Whilst these remnants of our British officers, with their wives and children, were thus miserably escaping from Delhi, there were others of our countrypeople, or co-religionists, who were in pitiable captivity there, awaiting death in a stifling dungeon. These were, for the most part, European or Eurasian inhabitants of the Darao-gunj, or English quarter of Delhi, engaged in commerce or trade. On the morning of the 11th of May, many of these people, hearing that the mutineers were crossing the bridge, gathered themselves in one of the "largest and strongest houses" occupied by our Christian people, and there barricaded themselves. These, however, and others, burnt or dragged out of their houses, escaped death only to

* See Lieutenant Vibart's Narrative.

† Mr. Williams, in his official report, gives a list—but not a complete one—of the Natives who succoured the Delhi fugitives. See also narrative of the escape of Captain T. W. Holland.

There being no milk in

the village, one Pultoo sweeper, or others of his family, used daily to take the trouble to go to procure some from adjacent villages." Again: "I remained with Jumnaadas (a Brahmin) six days. He gave me the best part of his house to live in, and the best food he could." &c. &c.

be carried prisoners to the Palace, where they were confined in an underground apartment, without windows, and only one door, so that little either of air or light ever entered the dreary dwelling. There nearly fifty Christian people—men, women, and children—were huddled together, scantily fed, constantly threatened and insulted by the Sepoys and Palace-guards, but bearing up bravely beneath the burden of their sorrows. After four or five days of this suffering, a servant of the King asked one of the ladies in the dungeon how, if they were restored to power, the English would treat the Natives; and the answer was, "Just as you have treated our husbands and children." On the following day they were led forth to die. The Palace-guards came to the prison-door and told them to come forth, as they were to be taken to a better residence. Sorely mistrusting their guards, they crowded out of the dungeon. A rope was thrown round them, encircling the party so that none could escape. Then they were taken to a courtyard—the appointed shambles—where great crowds of people were gathered together to witness the massacre of the Christians. As they stood there cursing the Feringhees and throwing up their jubilant cries, the work of slaughter commenced. It is not easy to tell the story with an assured belief in its truth. It seems, however, that the Nemesis of the Third Cavalry was there; that some of the troopers fired with carbine or pistol at the prisoners, but by mischance struck one of the King's retainers. Then there began a carnage at the sabre's edge. It is hard to say how it was done. Whether many or whether few swordsmen fell upon the Christians is uncertain.* But, in

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May 11—16.

May 16.

* One statement is to the effect fifty men fell upon them with their
that a hundred or a hundred and swords; and another is, that two

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May 16.

a brief space of time, fifty Christian people—men, women, and children—were remorselessly slain.* A sweeper, who had helped to dispose of the corpses, bore witness that there were only five or six men among them. The bodies were heaped up on a cart, borne to the banks of the Jumna, and thrown into the river.

So there was not, after that 16th of May, a single European left in Delhi, either in the Cantonment or in the City. The British had no longer any footing in the capital of the Mogul. We had been swept out by the great besom of destruction, and Behaudur Shah reigned in our place. Since the days of Suraf-ood-dowlah and the Black Hole, no such calamity had ever overtaken our people, and never since we first set foot on Indian soil any such dire disgrace. That a number of Christian people should be thus foully massacred was a great sorrow. but that nothing should be done to avenge the blood of our slaughtered countrymen was a far greater shame. The sorrow was at Delhi; the shame was at Meerut. The little band of Englishmen suddenly brought face to face with mutiny in the Lines, insurrection in the city, and revolution in the great teeming Palace of Delhi; who found, as their enemies on that May morning, six mutinous Sepoy Regiments, a hostile Mahomedan population, and the retainers of the old Mogul dynasty, with the King's name as the watchword, and the Princes as the leaders of the many-sided revolt, could not have done much more than they did to stem the tide that was rushing upon them. It was not possible that they should hold out for more

swindlers did the entire butchery by themselves.

three children, escaped by feigning Mahomedanism.

* A woman (Mrs. Aldwell) with

than one dreadful day with such a power arrayed against them. Their doom had been sealed in the early morning. When the hoofs of the foremost troop-horse rung upon the bridge across the Junna, the death-knell of the British was sounded. From morn to noon, from noon to sunset, still our people were sustained by a strong faith in the manhood of their countrymen, who, at a little distance, had Horse, and Foot, and a great strength of Artillery to bring to their succour. But when the sun went down, and there was no sign at Delhi of the approach of the Dragoons or the Galloper guns, they saw that they were deserted, and what could they do but fly?

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But did the responsibility of this grievous inaction rest with General Hewitt or with Brigadier Wilson? Question of responsibility.
The General has asserted that, as the command of the station was in the hands of the Brigadier, the movement of the troops depended upon him. But when a General Officer, commanding a division of the Army, thus shifts the responsibility on to the shoulders of a subordinate, he virtually seals his own condemnation. When, at a later period, Wilson was called upon by the supreme military authorities for a full explanation of the causes of the inaction of the European troops on the night of the 10th of May, and reference was made to what Hewitt had stated, the former wrote in reply, "I would beg to refer to the Regulations of the Bengal Army, Section XVII., which will show what little authority over the troops is given to the Brigadier commanding a station which is the Head-Quarters of a Division, and that I could not have exercised any distinct command, the Major-General being present on the occasion. As Brigadier,

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I only exercised the executive command of the troops under the orders of the Major-General." "I may or may not," he addêd, "have been wrong in offering the opinion I did to the Major-General. I acted to the best of my judgment at the time, and from the uncertainty regarding the direction taken by the fugitives, I still believe I was right. Had the Brigade blindly followed in the hope of finding the fugitives, and the remaining portion of the Cantonment been thereby sacrificed, with all our sick, women and children, and valuable stores, the outcry against those in command at Meerut would have been still greater than it has been."

Causes of
Failure.

This, in part, is the explanation of that first great failure, which so perplexed and astounded all who heard of it, and which led to great and disastrous results hereafter to be recorded. The military commanders at Meerut believed that it was their first duty to protect life and property in the Cantonment. The mutinous Sepoys, aided by the escaped convicts, and by ruffians and robbers from the bazaars and villages, had butchered men, women, and children, had burned and gutted the houses of the white people in the Native quarter of the Cantonment, and it was believed that, if due precautions were not taken, the other great half of military Meerut would share the same fate, that the Treasury would be plundered, and that the magazines would fall into the enemy's hands. To Wilson it was natural that the safety of the Cantonment should be his first care; but Hewitt commanded the whole Meerut division, including the great station of Delhi, with its immense magazine, and not a single European soldier to guard its profusion of military stores. It needed no breadth of vision, no forecasts to discern the tremendous danger which lay at the

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distance only of a night's march from Meerut—danger not local, but national; danger no less portentous in its political than in its military aspects. But not an effort was made to intercept the fatal flood of mutiny that was streaming into Delhi. General Hewitt ignored the fact that the whole of the Meerut Division was under his military charge, and thinking only of the safety of the place in which he himself resided, he stood upon the defensive for many days, whilst the rebels of the Lines, of the Gaols, and the Bazaars, were rejoicing in the work that they had done with impunity equal to their success.

But the judgment of the historian would be but a partial—an imperfect—judgment, if it were to stop here. There is something more to be said. Beneath these personal errors, there lay the errors of a vicious system and a false policy. To bring this great charge against one Commander of a Division or another Commander of a Division, against one Commander-in-Chief or another Commander-in-Chief, against one Governor-General or another Governor-General, against this Department or against that Department, would be a mistake and an injustice. It was not this or that man that wanted wisdom. The evil lay broad and deep in the national character. The arrogance of the Englishman, which covered him over with a great delusion, forbidding him to see danger when danger was surrounding him, and rendering it impossible in his eyes that any disaster should overtake so great and powerful a country, was the principal source of this great failure at Meerut. We were over lapping and lulling ourselves in a false security. We had warnings, many and significant; but we brushed them away with a movement of impatience and contempt. There is a cant phrase, which, be-

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cause it is cant, it may be beneath the dignity of History to cite; but no other words in the English language, counted by scores or by hundreds, can so express the prevailing faith of the Englishman at that time, as those two well-known words "*All serene.*" Whatever clouds might lower—whatever tempests might threaten—still it was "*All serene.*" It was held to be unbecoming an Englishman to be prepared for a storm. To speak of ugly signs or portents—to hint that there might be coming perils which it would be well to arm ourselves to encounter—was to be scouted as a feeble and dangerous alarmist. What had happened at Barrackpore and Berhampore might well have roused our people to cautious action. We had before seen storms burst suddenly upon us to our utter discomfiture and destruction; but we were not to be warned or instructed by them. When Henry Lawrence wrote, "*How unmindful have we been that what occurred in the city of Caubul may some day occur at Delhi, Meerut, or Bareilly,*"* no one heeded the prophetic saying any more than if he had prophesied the immediate coming of the day of judgment. Everything, therefore, at Meerut, in spite of plain and patent symptoms of an approaching outbreak, was in a state of utter unpreparedness for action. There were troopers without horses, troopers that could not ride—artillerymen without guns, and artillerymen who did not know a mortar from a howitzer, or the difference between round-shot and grape. This was not the fault of General Hewitt or Brigadier Wilson; it was the fault of the system—the policy. The prevailing idea, and one for which there was good war-

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rant, was, that the Government desired that things should be kept quiet. Even to have a battery of artillery equipped for immediate service was held to be a dangerous movement, that might excite alarm, and, perhaps, precipitate a crisis, which otherwise might be indefinitely delayed. When an officer of Artillery commanding one of the Meerut batteries sought permission, a few days before the outbreak, to load his ammunition-waggons, that he might be ready, in case of accident, for prompt service, he was told that such a step would excite suspicion among the natives, and that therefore it could not be sanctioned. And this may have been right. The wrong consisted in having allowed things to drift into such a state, that what ought to have been the rule was regarded as something altogether abnormal and exceptional, and as such, a cause of special alarm. The policy was to believe, or to pretend to believe, that our lines had been cast in pleasant places; and the system, therefore, was never to be prepared for an emergency—never to be ready to move, and never to know what to do. In pursuance of this system the Commander-in-Chief was in the great play-ground of Simlah, and the Chiefs of Departments were encouraging him in the belief that the cloud “would soon blow over.” So officers of all ranks in the great Divisions of the Army in the North-West—in the Sirhind, in the Meerut, in the Cawnpore Divisions—did, according to the pattern of Head-Quarters, and according to their instincts as Englishmen; and, therefore, when the storm burst, we were all naked, defenceless, and forlorn, and knew not how to encounter its fury.

It has been contended that a prompt movement in pursuit of the mutineers might not have been suc-

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Question of
pursuit con-
sidered.

cessful. And it is right that all circumstances of difficulty should be fully taken into account. Rebellion developed itself under the cover of the night. The mutineers dispersed themselves here and there, and our people knew not whither to follow them. The Cavalry, however, must have taken to the road, and where the native troopers could go, our Dragoons might have pursued them; but the former had a long start, and it is said that, as they would have been the first to enter Delhi, they would have destroyed the bridge across the Jumna; and that even if our Cavalry and Horse-Artillery had made their way into the City, they would have found themselves entangled in streets swarming with an armed rabble, stimulating and aiding the hostile Sepoy Regiments who had been prepared to welcome, and to cast in their lot with their comrades from Meerut. But it is to be observed, upon the other hand, that if the troopers of the Third Cavalry, who were the first to enter Delhi, had cut off the communication with Meerut, by destroying the bridge, they would have shut out large numbers of their own people, who were pouring, or rather dribbling, into Delhi all through the day. If the Meerut troops had arrived on the banks of the Jumna in a hurried mass, under a capable commander, they would, when the whole had passed over, have destroyed the bridge, to cut off the pursuit of the enemy from Meerut. But straggling in at intervals, under no recognised chiefs, this was not to be expected; and if it had been done, a great part of the Meerut Infantry Regiments must have fallen into the hands of the pursuing Englishmen, and been destroyed by their grape shot or sabres within sight of the palace windows.

But the more military argument in such a case

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does not dispose of the historical question ; for it was from the moral no less than from the material effects of the pursuit that advantage was to be derived. The sight of a single white face above the crest of a parapet has ere now put a garrison to flight. And it may not unreasonably be assumed that, if on that Monday morning a few English Dragoons had been seen approaching the Jumna, it would have been believed that a large body of white troops were behind them, and rebellion, which was precipitated by our inactivity, would then have been suspended by the fear of the coming retribution. Unless the Dragoons and Horse-Artillery had headed the Sepoys, which was not indeed to be expected, the first sudden rush into Delhi must have occasioned wild confusion, and many lives must have been sacrificed to the fury of the troopers and the rabble of abettors. But the disaster would have been but limited—the defeat but temporary. It is doubtful whether, if the avenging Englishmen had, that morning, appeared under the walls of Delhi, the Sepoy Regiments stationed there would have broken into rebellion ; and it is well nigh certain, that in the presence of the British troops the Royal Family of Delhi would not have dared to proclaim themselves on the side of the mutineers. All through the hours of the morning there was doubt and hesitation both in the Cantonments and in the Palace ; and it was not until the sun was going down that it became manifest that Delhi was in the throes of a great revolution. Emboldened and encouraged by what seemed to be the sudden prostration of the English, our enemies saw that their time had come, whilst our friends lost confidence in our power and our fortune, and feared to declare themselves on our side. Better in that case for the English soldiers to

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come to Delhi to be beaten than not to come at all. It was the want of effort at such a moment that did us such grievous harm. For from one station to another the news spread that the Sepoys had conquered the English at Meerut, and proclaimed the Mogul Emperor at Delhi. The first great blow had been struck at the Feringhees, and ever from place to place the rumour ran that they had been paralysed by it.*.

Alleged conspiracy for a general rising.

There is another question to which, fitly here, a few sentences may be devoted. It has been said that, in looking at this great history of the Sepoy War as a whole, we shall not take just account of it, unless we consider that, inasmuch as there had been a conspiracy throughout the Bengal Native Army for a general rising of the Sepoys all over the country on a given day, the sudden outbreak at Meerut, which caused a premature development of the plot, and put the English on their guard before the appointed hour, was the salvation of the British Empire in India. Colonel Carmichael Smyth was ever assured in his own mind that, by evolving the crisis in the Third Cavalry Regiment, he had saved the Empire. It was his boast, and he desired that it should be made known to all men, that he might have the full credit of the act. And I am bound to say that there is high testimony in support of the belief thus confidently expressed. Mr. Cracroft Wilson, who was selected by the Supreme Government to fill the post of Special Commissioner, after the suppression of rebellion, with a view to the punishment of the guilty and the reward of the deserving, has placed

* There is an expressive Hindoostanee word in very common currency among both Europeans and Natives on the Bengal side of India

—"lacher," or helpless. It was currently said that the English were lacher.

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upon record his full belief in this story of a general conspiracy for a simultaneous rising. "Carefully collating," he has written, "oral information with facts as they occurred, I am convinced that Sunday, 31st of May, 1857, was the day fixed for mutiny to commence throughout the Bengal Army; that there were committees of about three members in each regiment which conducted the duties, if I may so speak, of the mutiny; that the Sepoys, as a body, knew nothing of the plans arranged; and that the only compact entered into by regiments, as a body, was, that their particular regiments would do as the other regiments did. The committee conducted the correspondence and arranged the plan of operations, viz., that on the 31st of May parties should be told off to murder all European functionaries, most of whom would be engaged at church; seize the treasure, which would then be augmented by the first instalment of the rubbie harvest; and release the prisoners, of which an army existed in the North-Western Provinces alone of upwards of twenty-five thousand men. The regiments in Delhi and its immediate vicinity were instructed to seize the magazine and fortifications. . . . From this combined, and simultaneous massacre on the 31st of May, 1857, we were, humanly speaking, saved by Lieutenant-Colonel Smyth commanding the Third Regiment of Bengal Light Cavalry, and the frail ones of the Bazaar.* . . . The mine had been prepared and the train had been laid, but it was not intended to light the slow match for another three weeks. The spark, which fell from female lips, ignited it at once, and the night of the 10th of May, 1857, saw the com-

1857. commencement of a tragedy never before witnessed since
May. India passed under British sway."*

This is strong testimony, and from a strong man—one not prone to violent assumptions or strange conjectures, who had unusual opportunities of investigating the truth, and much discernment and discrimination to turn those opportunities to account. But the proofs of this general combination for a simultaneous rising of the Native troops are not so numerous or so convincing as to warrant the acceptance of the story as a demonstrated fact. It is certain, however, that if this sudden rising in all parts of the country had found the English unprepared, but few of our people would have escaped the swift destruction. It would then have been the hard task of the British nation to reconquer India, or else to suffer our Eastern Empire to pass into an ignominious tradition. But whether designed or not designed by man, God's mercy forbade its accomplishment; and in a few hours after this first great explosion, the Electric Telegraph was carrying the evil tidings to all parts of the country. The note of warning was sounded across the whole length and breadth of the land; and wherever an Englishman was stationed there was the stern preparation of defence.

* Mr. J. C. Wilson's Moradabad Narrative (Official), Dec. 24, 1858.

CHAPTER IV.

EFFORTS OF LORD CANNING—STATE OF PUBLIC FEELING IN CALCUTTA — APPREHENSIONS AND ALARMS—BEARING OF THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL — CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF—THE FIRST MOVEMENT TOWARDS DELHI—DEATH OF GENERAL ANSON—FIRST ARRIVAL OF SUCCOURS—APPEARANCE OF COLONEL NEILL.

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WHILST little by little the details recited in the preceding chapter were making themselves known to Lord Canning in Calcutta, the Governor-General, calmly confronting the dangers and difficulties before him, was straining every nerve to repair the first great disaster, and to protect those defenceless tracts of country in which new rebellions were most likely to assert themselves. "The part of the country," he wrote to the President of the India Board, "which gives me most anxiety is the line which stretches through the length of Bengal from Barrackpore close by to Agra in the North-Western Provinces. In that length of seven hundred and fifty miles, there is one European Regiment at Dinapore, and that is all. Benares has a Sikh Regiment, but no Europeans; Allahabad the same; not reckoning a hundred European invalids, who were sent there a few days ago. At one of these places the Native Regiment is a suspected one, and at either the temptation to seize the Fort or the Trea-

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sury will be very great, if they hear that Delhi continues in the hands of mutinous regiments. Therefore, the two points to which I am straining are the hastening of the expulsion of the rebels from Delhi, and the collection of the Europeans here to be pushed up the country." What he did, in the early part of May, for the gathering of troops from a distance, has been told in the first volume of this History. The results of those initial efforts rapidly developed themselves; but what seems to be swift despatch, in tranquil times, is weary waiting, when the issues of life or death may depend upon the loss or gain of an hour.

Calcutta in
the month of
May.

Meanwhile, in the great vice-regal capital of India there was much tribulation. For there were gathered together large numbers of Christian people, men, women, and children. But numbers did not seem to impart to them either strength or courage. A vast majority of those Christian inhabitants were men who had been habituated, through long years, to peace and security. There was not in the whole world, perhaps, a more tranquil, self-possessed City, than Calcutta had ever been during a period of nearly a century. Even the local tumults, to which all great towns are more or less periodically subject, had been absent from the "City of Palaces." The worst disturbances had resulted from the excitability of stray sailors from the merchant-ships overmuch refreshed in the punch-houses of the Dhurrumtollah or the Chitpore Bazaar. And the natives of the country generally had been regarded as a harmless, servile, obsequious race of men, to be reviled, perhaps beaten at discretion, by the haughty and

intolerant Englishman. That Englishman, as seen in Calcutta, was, for the most part, of the non-official type; experienced in the ways of commerce, active, enterprising, intelligent, but with little knowledge of the Native character save in its trading aspects, and little given to concern himself about intricate questions of Indian policy. The name of "Ditcher" had been given to him, as one who seldom or never passed beyond the boundary of the Mahratta ditch. The railway had done something to diminish this inclusiveness; but still many of the European residents of Calcutta knew little of the great world beyond, and were prone, therefore, to attach undue importance to the busy commercial capital in which they were buying and selling, and were holding their household gods. Their idea of India much resembled the Chinese map-maker's idea of the world. The City of Palaces, like the Celestial Empire, covered in their minds, nearly the whole of the sheet.

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The non-official Englishman.

It was not strange that men of this class, unaccustomed to great excitements, little used to strenuous action of any kind, and in many instances, perhaps, wholly unskilled in the use of offensive weapons, should have been stunned and bewildered by the tidings from the North-West, and what seemed to them the probabilities of a recurrence of similar tragedies in Bengal. Nor was it strange that they should have looked eagerly to the Government to put forth all its available resources to protect them against the dangers which their excited imaginations beheld rapidly approaching. The very confidence which they had before felt in their security, and their general contempt for the subject races, now rendered the reaction which had set in all the more exaggerated and overwhelming. The panic in May has, perhaps, been

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overstated in the recital. But stories are still current of Christian families betaking themselves for safety to the ships in the river, or securing themselves within the ramparts of the Fort, and of men staining their manhood by hiding themselves in dark places. But these manifestations of unmanly fear were principally among the Eurasians and Portuguese, or what are described as the "lower order of European shopkeepers." That some people left their homes in the suburbs, that some took their passages to England, that many bought guns and revolvers, and lay down to rest full-dressed and full-armed, is not to be questioned.* And it is certain that the prevailing feeling was that the Governor-General failed to appreciate the magnitude of the danger—that nothing could rouse him from the lethargy indicated by his still face of marble and his tranquil demeanour—and that, in a word, he was not equal to the occasion.

It would be unjust to say that the apprehensions of the Calcutta community were altogether unreasoning and unreasonable, for there were many sources of alarm at this time. Foremost of all there was the great dread of the Sepoys, who, a little while before trusted guardians of our lives and properties, had suddenly grown into murderers and despoilers. There was but little space between Barrackpore and Calcutta. A night's march might have brought the

* I wish it to be borne in mind that this refers entirely to the state of things in May. A far more unmistakable panic, of which some account will hereafter be given, arose in the middle of June. But even of the former month a contemporary journalist wrote: "Men went about with revolvers in their carriages, and trained their bearings to load quickly and fire low. The ships and steamers in the rivers have been crowded with families seeking refuge from the attack, which was nightly expected, and everywhere a sense of insecurity prevailed, which was natural enough when the character of the danger apprehended is taken into consideration."—*Friend of India*, May 28.

whole brigade into the capital, to overpower the European guards, to seize the Fort, and to massacre the Christian inhabitants. Then there was in the immediate suburbs of Calcutta, along the river-bank, the great, reeking, overflowing sewer of the Oude household—the exiled King, his astute Prime Minister, and his multitude of dependants, all restless in intrigue, and eager to inflict measureless retribution upon the nation that had degraded and despoiled them. And then again there was a vague fear, dominant over all, that the vast and varied populations of the Native suburbs and bazaars would rise against the white people, release the prisoners in the gaols, and gorge themselves with the plunder of the great commercial capital of India. All these were at least possibilities. What had been done at Meerut and Delhi might be acted over again at Calcutta on a larger scale and with more terrible effect.

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After a lapse of years we may speak lightly of these dangers, and say that Lord Canning discerned the true state of things, whilst others saw them darkly through the glass of their fears. But the difference, perhaps, was rather that of outward bearing than of inward appreciation of the position of affairs. It is hard to say how much depends, in such a crisis, upon the calm and confident demeanour of the head of the Government. Day after day passed, and the Governor-General sat there, firm as a rock, waiting for fresh tidings of disaster, and doing all that human agency could do to succour our distressed people and to tread down the insolence of the enemy. The great English community of Calcutta thought that he did not see the magnitude of the danger, because he did not tremble for the fate of the capital. He did not know what it was to tremble,

Bearing of
Lord Canning

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and some said that he did not know what it was to feel. But though he wore a calm face, in no man's mind was there a clearer sense of the magnitude of the crisis,* and in no man's heart was there a deeper pity. He pitied those at a distance, who were really girt about with peril, and whose despairing cries for help, in the shape of English troops, nearly broke his heart. But he pitied most of all, with a contemptuous pity, those who exaggerated the dangers around them, who could not conceal their fears, and who would fain have induced him to treat Calcutta as though it were the whole Indian Empire. If there were any impassiveness, any obduracy in him, it was simply that he could not bring himself to think much about the place in which he was living, whilst there were other places begirt with more imminent peril. He forgot himself, with the self-negation of a noble nature, and, forgetting himself, he may for a while have forgotten those immediately around him. And so it happened that the fears of many Englishmen in Calcutta were mixed with strong resentments, and they began to hate the Governor-General who could not bring himself to think that the Indian Empire was included within the circuit of the Marhatta ditch.

As the month of May advanced, the panic increased. It has been shown, in measured terms, what the Go-

* Lord Canning's correspondence abounds with proofs of this. Take the following from a characteristic letter to Bishop Wilson, which clearly shows that he did not under-rate the danger, although he was confident of the national ability to surmount it: "The sky is very black, and as yet the signs of a clearing are faint. But reason and common sense are on our side from the very beginning.

The course of the Government has been guided by justice and temper. I do not know that any one measure of precaution and strength, which human foresight can indicate, has been neglected. There are stout hearts and clear heads at the chief points of danger—Agra, Lucknow, and Benares. For the rest, the issue is in higher hands than ours. I am very confident of complete success."

vernor-General thought of these manifestations of a great terror.* In later letters he spoke out in more emphatic language, and cotemporary records of a less exalted character seem to support his assertions. Perhaps his eagerness to encourage others, by showing that he had no fear for the Presidency, carried him into an excess of outward indifference. Certainly, he did not seem to appreciate, in the first instance, an offer made by the British inhabitants to enrol themselves into a volunteer corps for the protection of the great City of Palaces. Many public bodies came forward at this time with protestations of unswerving loyalty and free offers of service. The Trades Association, the Masonic Lodges, the Native Christian Community, and side by side with our own compatriots and fellow-subjects, the representatives of the great French and American nations, sympathising with us in our distress. Such offers were worthy and honourable, and entitled to all gratitude from our rulers. Those communities desired to be armed and disciplined and organised after the manner of soldiers. Lord Canning told them in reply that they might enrol themselves as special constables. And it was thought that there was a touch of contempt in the very nature of the answer.

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Volunteer
offers.

But, although Lord Canning believed that there was a "groundless panic," he had no design to reject contemptuously those offers of assistance. His desire was to display no outward symptom of alarm or mistrust. He was supreme ruler, not of a class or of a community, but of all classes and communities. He saw clearly that the great fear had possessed every quarter of the city and its suburbs, and was agitating

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the breasts of all the varied populations inhabiting them, and he knew that what might tranquillise and subdue in one direction might alarm and irritate in another. At no period of our history were the Natives of India in so great a paroxysm of fear. They shuddered to think that they might lose their caste—shuddered to think that they might lose their lives. All sorts of strange reports were afloat among the people, and the English were eager that Lord Canning should contradict them by public proclamation. “One of the last reports rife in the Bazaar,” he wrote on the 20th of May, “is, that I have ordered beef to be thrown into the tanks, to pollute the caste of all Hindoos who bathe there, and that on the Queen’s birthday all the grain-shops are to be closed, in order to drive the people to eat unclean food. Men, who ought to have heads on their shoulders, are gravely asking that each fable should be contradicted by proclamation as it arises, and are arming themselves with revolvers because this is not done. I have already taken the only step that I consider advisable, in the sense of a refutation of these and like rumours, and patience, firmness, and I hope a speedy return of the deluded to common sense, will do the rest.” And clearly recognising all these conflicting fears and suspicions, he walked steadily but warily between them, assailed on all sides by cries for special help, but knowing well that the safety of all depended upon the strength and constancy of his resistance.

Celebration
of the Queen’s
Birthday.
May 25.

The Queen’s birthday was celebrated in Calcutta after the wonted fashion. A grand ball was given at Government House.* It was the desire of Lord Canning, above all things, that nothing should be done to betray any want of confidence in the general

* The 24th of May fell on Sunday. The celebration was, therefore, on the 25th.

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May.

loyalty of the people. He had been besought to exchange his own personal guard of Natives for one composed of Europeans, but this he had refused to do. And the sweet face of Lady Canning was to be seen, evening after evening, calm and smiling, as she took her wonted drive on the Course or in the open suburbs of Calcutta. And now that it was represented that it might be expedient to omit the usual feu-de-joie fired in the Queen's honour, the suggestion was rejected; but in order that there might be no misapprehension as to the ammunition used on the occasion, a guard of Sepoys was sent to bring some of the old unsuspected cartridges out of the regimental stores at Barrackpore. The ball in the evening was well attended; but some absented themselves, believing that the congregation under one roof of all the leading members of the English community would suggest a fitting occasion for an attack on Government House.* There was not, indeed, a ruffle even upon the surface; although the day was likely to be one of more than usual excitement, for it was the great Mahomedan festival of the Eed, and it was thought in many places besides Calcutta that a Musulman rising might be anticipated. After this there was some little return of confidence. But any accidental circumstance, such as the explosion of a few festal fireworks, was sufficient to throw many into a paroxysm of alarm.†

* "Two young ladies refused to go at the last moment, and sat up with a small bag prepared for flight, till their father returned from the ball and reassured them."

"Miss — has hired two sailors to sit up in her house of a night; but they got tipsy, and frightened her more than imaginary enemies."—*Journal of a Lady, M.S.*

† "A few nights ago woke up at

two o'clock by what sounded like guns firing. Many thought the Alipore jail had been broken open. Many gentlemen armed themselves, and got carriages ready for the ladies to fly to the Fort. On going into the verandah I was thankful to see a great display of fireworks going up, which was the cause of all the noise. It was the marriage of one of the Mysore princes."—*Ibid.*

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May.

The first
movement on
Delhi.

All this time, Lord Canning, aided by those immediately around him, was doing all that could be done for the successful attainment of the great ends to which he had addressed himself from the commencement—the recovery of Delhi and the protection of the Gangetic provinces. But it was not easy in the existing dearth of troops to accomplish both of these objects with the desired despatch; and it is not strange, therefore, that some difference of opinion prevailed among the advisers of Lord Canning as to the policy which, in these straitened circumstances, it was more expedient to adopt. It is believed that the Civil members of the Supreme Council, seeing how large a portion of our available military strength would be locked up under the walls of Delhi, and how, in the meanwhile, large breadths of country would be exposed to the fury of the enemy, advised that the attack on the great city of the Mogul should be delayed for a while, in order to employ the European troops in Upper India upon the general defence of the country. Sir John Low was of a different opinion; and he drew up a minute on the subject, full of sound arguments in favour of an immediate effort to recover the lost position. But the Governor-General had already come to that conclusion. Indeed, he had never doubted, for a day, that let what might happen elsewhere, it was his first duty to wrest the imperial city from the hands of the Insurgents. He saw plainly that the fall of Delhi had imparted a political, a national significance to a movement, which otherwise might have been regarded as little more than a local outbreak. It had, indeed, converted for a while a mutiny into a revolution; and the Governor-General felt, therefore, that to strike at Delhi, was to strike at the very heart of the danger—that to deliver a deadly blow at that

point would be to cause an immediate collapse of the vital powers of rebellion from one end of the country to the other.

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So he at once issued his orders for the striking of that blow; and day after day the telegraph wires carried to the Commander-in-Chief briefly emphatic orders to make short work of Delhi. Though the Lower Provinces were all but bare of European troops there was some wealth of English regiments upon the slopes of the Northern Hills, where the Head-Quarters of the Army were then planted; and Lord Canning, with something of the impetuosity of the civilian, which is prone to overlook military difficulties, believed that those regiments might be gathered up at once and poured down with resistless force upon Delhi. Severed by nearly a thousand miles from the point of attack, he felt that he himself could do but little. But he had faith in the Commander-in-Chief—faith in the Lieutenant-Governor of the North-West Provinces—faith in the great Commissioner of the Punjab; and in the first letter which he wrote to England, after the outbreak at Meerut, he said: "As to expediting the crushing of the Delhi rebels, I work at some disadvantage at a distance of nine hundred miles; but the forces are converging upon the point as rapidly as the season will admit, and I am confident that with Colvin's aid and example, every man will be inspirited to do his utmost. I have made the Commander-in-Chief aware of the vast importance to the Lower Provinces that an end should be made of the work quickly. Time is everything. Delhi once crushed, and a terrible example made, we shall have no more difficulties." To what extent the realised facts fulfilled his sanguine anticipations, will presently be made apparent.

Meanwhile, the Governor-General was anxiously

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Movement of
troops from
below.

turning to good account the first-fruits of his initial measures for the collection of European troops, and trying to succour those defenceless posts at which the enemy were most likely to strike. The difficulties and perplexities which beset him were great. He had only two European regiments in the neighbourhood of the capital—the Fifty-third Foot, whose Head-Quarters were in Fort William, and the Eighty-fourth, who had been brought round from Rangoon in March, and who had since been stationed at Chinsurah, on the banks of the Hooghly, above Barrackpore. He would fain have sent upwards a part of the little strength thus gathered at the Presidency; but those two regiments were all that belonged to him for the defence of Lower Bengal. There was not another English regiment nearer than Dinapore, four hundred miles distant from Calcutta. And there, in the immediate neighbourhood of the capital, were many points which it was of extreme importance to defend. There was Fort William, with its great Arsenal; there was the Gun-manufactory at Cossipore, a few miles higher up the river; there was the Powder-manufactory at Ishapore, some twelve miles beyond, and there was the Artillery School of Instruction at Dum-Dum, with all its varied appliances for the manufacture of ordnance stores. A little way beyond Chowringhee, the fashionable suburb of the City of Palaces, lay the great gaol of Alipore, crowded with malefactors, many of the worst class; and hard by were the Government clothing godowns, or stores, from which the uniforms and accoutrements of the army were drawn. Then in different parts of the city were the Calcutta Mint and the Treasury and the Banks, all groaning with coin—so that there was nothing wanting that could have supplied an

insurgent army with all the munitions and equipments of war, and enabled them to take the field against us with the unfailing cement of high pay to keep them together.

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Wise after the event, public writers have said that if Lord Canning, in the third week of the month of May, had accepted the first offer of the European inhabitants to enroll themselves into a volunteer corps—that if he had disbanded the Sepoy Regiments at Barrackpore, and ordered the disbandment of those at Dinapore—events which were subsequently rendered necessary—a large portion of the European force in Bengal might have been set free and pushed up by rail and road to the points which were most beset with danger, and that great disasters which subsequently befel us might thus have been averted.* There are, doubtless, many things which, in that month of May, would have been done differently, and might have been done better, if the future had been clearly revealed to those who had the conduct of affairs. But we must judge men according

Conduct of
Government
considered.

* The two ablest of the early writers, the author of the "Red Pamphlet," and Mr. Meade, in his "Sepoy Revolt," dwell very emphatically on this point. The former says: "An enrolment on a large scale at this time would have enabled the Governor-General to dispense with the services of one European regiment at least; but so bent was he on ignoring the danger, that he not only declined the offers of the 'Traders' Association, the Masonic Fraternity, the Native converts, the Americans, and the French inhabitants and others, but he declined them in terms calculated to deaden rather than to excite a feeling of loyalty." Mr. Meade says: "A thousand English volunteer infantry, four hundred cavalry, and fifteen

hundred sailors were at the disposal of the Government a week after the revolt became known. . . . Whilst the volunteers were learning how to load and fire, and the merchant seamen were being instructed in the use of artillery, Government might have placed from the terminus (at Raneegunge) to Cawpore a line of stations for horses and bullocks, guarded, if necessary, by posts of armed men. . . . Had Government only consented to do just a fortnight beforehand what they were coerced to do on the 14th of June, they might have had on the first day of that month a force of two thousand Europeans at Raneegunge, fully equipped with guns and stores."

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to the light of the day which shone upon them, not the light of the morrow, which had not yet broken when they were called upon to act. Illumined by this morrow's light, we now know that it might have been better if the Barrackpore and Dinapore regiments had been disarmed in the middle of May; but the former were then protesting their loyalty, and offering to fight against the rebels, and the latter were still believed in by General Lloyd, who commanded the Division.* The temper of the troops, in all parts of the country, seemed at that time to depend upon the fate of Delhi, and more experienced Indian statesmen than Lord Canning believed that Delhi would soon be crushed. And, whilst it was deemed expedient to keep the Bengal Native Army together so long as any hope survived, it was, at that time, in Bengal, held to be impossible to disarm all the Native regiments. Disarming, said Lord Canning, is "a very effective measure, where practicable, but in Bengal, where we have, spread over from Barrackpore to Cawnpore, fifteen Native regiments to one European, simply impossible. A very different game has to be played here."†

Moreover, in the neighbourhood both of Calcutta and of Dinapore, there were other dangers than those arising from the armed Sepoy regiments. In the latter there was the excited Mahomedan population of Patna, of which I shall speak hereafter; and in the former there were the many local perils, of which I

* As late as the 2nd of June, General Lloyd wrote to Lord Canning, saying, "Although no one can now feel full confidence in the loyalty of Native troops generally, yet I believe that the regiments here will remain quiet, unless some great temptation or excitement should

assail them, in which case I fear they could not be relied upon. The thing required to keep them steady is a blow quickly struck at Delhi."

—*M.S. Correspondence.*

† Lord Canning to Mr. Vernon Smith, June 5, 1857.—*M.S. Correspondence.*

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have already spoken. And it was at least doubtful whether an undisciplined body of sailors and civilians, even with a few staff-officers to keep them together, would have supplied the place of a regular regiment of Europeans. Lord Canning, knowing well the constitution of the European community of Calcutta did not think, from the very nature of their interests and their occupations, that they could form a defensive body on which any reliance could be placed. Where the treasure of men is there will their hearts be also; and, in many instances, if possible, their hands. It was hardly to be expected that, if there had been any sudden alarm—if the signal had been sounded, and every man's services needed in a critical emergency, many would not have thought rather of their wives and children than of the public safety, and some, perhaps, more of their own material property than of that of the State.* Doubtless there were brave and patriotic spirits among them who would have gone gladly to the front; but Lord Canning, perhaps, did not err in thinking that the majority of members of the non-military community were too much encumbered by their worldly affairs to make efficient soldiers, either for the performance of ordinary duties or the confronting of imminent peril. That they could have formed a substitute for regular soldiers was improbable, though they would have been a serviceable supplement to them.

If, then, the volunteers had been enrolled when the first offer of service was made to Lord Canning,

* It is very vividly in my recollection that, on the famous 10th of April, 1848, when there was a vague expectation that London would be sacked by the Chartists, and immense numbers of special constables had been sworn in, I asked one of

the most experienced men in the district in which I lived how many of those sworn in would turn out on the given signal (it was to be the ringing of the church bell), and I was told "not ten per cent."

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he could not have done more than he did to send succours up the country. Nor did it, at the time, seem to him that the danger was so imminent on the Gangetic provinces as to demand that Bengal should be stripped, even for a few weeks, of her only reliable defences. It was just during that particular interval between the receipt of intelligence of the Meerut outbreak and the arrival of the first reinforcements from beyond the seas, that the accounts from the upper country were least alarming. There was, apparently, a suspension of rebellious activity. The telegraphic messages received from the principal stations were all of an assuring character. On the 19th and 20th the report from Benares was, "All perfectly quiet," "troops steady." On the 19th Sir Henry Lawrence telegraphed from Lucknow, "All very well in city, cantonments, and country." Sir Hugh Wheeler, at Cawnpore, on the same day, sent a kindred message, "All quiet here, the excitement somewhat less." From Allahabad, on the same day, the tidings were, "Troops quiet and well behaved;" and the Lieutenant-Governor of the North-West Provinces at Agra assured the Governor-General that "Things were looking cheerful." "There may," it was added, "be some delay in the actual advance on Delhi. It is generally felt, however, that it must soon fall, and the flame has not spread." The following days brought intelligence of the same satisfactory complexion, the only evil tidings being those which spoke of mutiny at Alighur, and that was quickly followed by the announcement from Agra that a strong expedition had been organised for the recapture of the place.

There was little, therefore, that Lord Canning could do in the earlier weeks of May to succour the

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North-Western Provinces, and judged by the light of the day no pressing necessity to incur, for that purpose, great risks in the neighbourhood of the capital. What little he could do with safety he did. He ordered up a detachment of the Eighty-fourth to Benares, and he suggested to General Lloyd, at Dinapore, that he might, perhaps, send a company or two of the Tenth to the same point. These first movements might save a few lives, and might give a general impression of action on our part, the importance of which was great at such a time. But it was to the reinforcements coming from beyond the seas that he eagerly looked for substantive aid. He had written on the 19th to the Indian Minister in England, saying: "Towards this object the steps taken are as follows—The Madras Fusiliers are on their way, and will be here on the 21st or 22nd. A regiment has been sent for from Rangoon, and will arrive in the course of next week. Two regiments at least with some Artillery (perhaps three regiments), will come round from Bombay as soon as they arrive from Persia. They are all on their way. Another regiment from Kurrachee is ordered up the Indus to Ferozpoor, as a stand-by, if John Lawrence should want help. An officer goes to-day to Ceylon to procure from Sir Henry Ward every soldier he can spare. I have asked for at least five hundred Europeans, but will accept Malays in place of or besides them. The same officer carries letters to Elgin and Ashburnham, begging that the regiments destined for China may be turned first to India. . . . This is all that I can do at present to collect European strength, except the withdrawal of one more regiment from Pegu, which, when a steamer is available, will take place." And now,

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before the end of the month, he learnt that the Madras Fusiliers were in the river. Such was his confidence, that when succours began to arrive, he felt, however small they might be in proportion to his needs, that the tide was beginning to turn in his favour. After a fortnight of enforced inaction, there was something invigorating in the thought that he was now beginning to hold palpably in his hands the means of rendering substantial aid to his defenceless countrymen. And he knew, moreover, that the moral effect of the arrival of a single European regiment would be greater than the material assistance, for it would soon be noised abroad that the English were coming from beyond the seas to avenge their slaughtered brethren, and Rumour would be sure to magnify the extent of the arrival.*

Colonel Neill
and the
Madras
Fusiliers.

Still, in itself the gain was very great; for the vessels which were working up the Hooghly were bringing not only a well-seasoned, well-disciplined regiment, in fine fighting order, but a chief who had within him all the elements of a great soldier. The Second Madras European Regiment was commanded by Colonel James George Neill. It was one of those few English regiments which, enlisted for the service of the East India Company, and maintained exclusively on the Indian establishment, bore on their banners the memorials of a series of victories from

* I am aware that a contrary statement has been made. It has been asserted that the Government took pains rather to conceal than to make known the arrival of reinforcements at Calcutta. Especially by disguising the names of the vessels in which the troops were coming up the river. If the *Albatross*, for example, were coming up, she was telegraphed, it was said, as the *Sarah Sands*. Assuming the fact to

be as stated, we may readily understand the object of the concealment. It might have been sound policy not to make known the coming of the troops until they were landed and fit for service. If there had been any combination for a rising, the moment seized would probably have been when it was known that our reinforcements were at the Sandheads. But I am assured, on the highest authority, that the story is not true.

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the earliest days of our conquests in India. It had just returned from the Persian Gulf, when Neill, fresh from Crimean service,* found to his delight that he was to be appointed to command the regiment, with which he had served during the greater part of his adult life. He had gone down to see the regiment disembark, and he had written in his journal that they were "a very fine healthy body of men, fully equal to any regiment he had ever seen." This was on the 20th of April, and he little then knew how soon he would be called upon to test their efficiency in the field. Three or four weeks afterwards, news came that Upper India was in a blaze, and the tidings were quickly followed by a summons for the regiment to take ship for Bengal. Then Neill rejoiced exceedingly to think of the lessons he had learnt in the Crimea, and the experience he had gained there; and he felt, to use his own words, "fully equal to any extent of professional employment or responsibility which could ever devolve upon him."

Born in the month of May, 1810, at a short distance from the chief town of Ayrshire, in Scotland, James Neill had entered the Indian service in his seventeenth year, and was, therefore, when summoned to take active part in the Sepoy War, a man of forty-seven years of age, and a soldier of thirty years' standing. Of a strong physical constitution, of active athletic habits, he shrunk from no work, and he was overcome by no fatigue. There were few men in the whole range of the Indian Army better qualified by nature and by training to engage in the stirring events of such a campaign as was

* He had been Second-in-Command, under Sir Robert Vivian, of the Anglo-Turkish Contingent.

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opening out before him. He was a God-fearing Scotchman, with something in him of the old Covenantant type. He was gentle and tender as a woman, in his domestic relations, chivalrous and self-denying in all the actions of his life, and so careful, as a commander, of all under his charge, that he would have yielded his tent or given up his meals to any one more needing them than himself. But towards the enemies of our nation and the persecutors of our race he was as hard and as fiery as flint; and he was not one to be tolerant of the shortcomings of our own people, wanting in courage or capacity, or in any way failing in their manliness. He knew, when he embarked for Bengal, that there was stern work before him; and he brooded over the future so intently, that the earnestness and resolution within him spoke out ever from his countenance, and it was plain to those around him, that once in front of the enemy, he would smite them with an unsparing hand, and never cease from his work, until he should witness its full completion or be arrested by the stroke of death.

May 23.

On the 23rd of May, Colonel Neill was off Calcutta with the leading wing of his regiment, and soon the whole corps had disembarked. But it was easier to bring troops into port along the great highway of the ocean, than to despatch them with the required rapidity into the interior of the country. Every possible provision, however, had been made and was still being made to push forward the reinforcements by river and by road. Every available horse and bullock along the line had been purchased by Government; every carriage and cart secured for the conveyance of the troops up the country.* The river

* "A steady stream of reinforcements is now being poured into Benares. Every horse and bullock that can be bought on the road is engaged,

steamers were carrying their precious freights of humanity, but too slowly for our needs, in that dry season, and the railway was to be brought into requisition to transport others to the scene of action. It was by the latter route that the bulk of Neill's regiment, in all nine hundred strong, were to be despatched towards Benares.* It might have been supposed that, at such a time, every Christian man in Calcutta would have put forth all his strength to perfect and to expedite the appointed work, eager to contribute by all means within his power to the rescue of imperilled Christendom. Especially was it to be looked for that all holding such authority as might enable them to accelerate the despatch of troops to our threatened, perhaps beleaguered posts, would strain every nerve to accomplish effectually this good work. But on the platform of the Calcutta terminus, on the river side, opposite to Howrah, all such natural zeal as this seemed to be basely wanting. There was no alacrity in helping the troops to start on their holy duty; and soon apathy and inaction grew into open opposition. When the second party of a hundred men was to be despatched, stress of weather delayed their arrival, from the flats in the river, at the platform or landing-stage, near which the train was waiting for them, under the orders of the Supreme

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May.

and the dawk establishments have been increased to the utmost. The men who go by horse-dawk reach Benares in five days; those by bullock in ten. The former conveyance can take only from eighteen to twenty-four a day; the latter a hundred. Some are gone up by steamers. These will be sixteen days on the journey."—*Lord Canning to Sir H. Wheeler, May 20. MS.*

* "I landed and saw the Military

Secretary and the Deputy Quarter-master-General, and made all arrangement to start off the men I had brought up by steamers to Benares. However, next day there was a change. Only a hundred and thirty men went up the country by steamer, and the rest I am starting off by the train."—*Private Letter of Col. Neill.* The rail then only went as far as Raneegunge.

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Government. But as the Fusiliers came alongside and were landing, in the darkness of the early night, without an effort of help from the railway people, the station-master cried out that they were late, and that the train would not wait for them a moment. Against this Neill remonstrated, but the official, growing more peremptory in his tone and insolent in his manner, threatened at once to start the train. Other functionaries then came forward, and addressed him in the same threatening strain. One said that the Colonel might command his regiment, but that he did not command the railway, and that the train should be despatched without him. On this, Neill telling them that they were traitors and rebels, and that it was fortunate for them that he had not to deal with them, placed a guard over the engineer and stoker, and told them to stir at their peril. A few weeks later, in parts of the country more distant from the central authority, such traitors as these would, perhaps, have been hanged.

The train started, some ten minutes after its appointed time, with its precious burden of Fusiliers; and the tidings of what Neill had done soon reached Lord Canning. It was not in the brave heart of the Governor-General to refuse its meed of admiration to such an act. Even official Calcutta, though a little startled in its properties, commended, after a time, the Madras Colonel, whilst at all the stations above, when the story was known, people said that the right man was on his way to help them, and looked eagerly for the coming succours.

legislative
instruments.

And never, in a season of trouble, was there a more timely arrival; for the lull of which I have

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May.

spoken now seemed to be at an end. As the month of May burnt itself out, the tidings which came from the country above were more distressing and more alarming. It was plain that the North-West Provinces, from one end to the other, were fast blazing into rebellion—plain that we were destined to see worse things than any we had yet witnessed—and that the whole strength of the British nation must be put forth to grapple with the gigantic danger. If there had been any hope before, that the rebellion would die out, or be paralysed by the infliction of swift retribution on Delhi, it had now ceased to animate the breasts of Lord Canning and his colleagues. They now saw that it was necessary to the salvation of the English power in India, not only that our people should be everywhere let loose upon the enemy, but that they should be armed with exceptional powers suited to, and justified by, the crisis. A reign of lawlessness had commenced; but for a while the avenging hand of the English Government had been restrained by the trammels of the written law. It was time now to cease from the unequal conflict. The English were few; their enemies were many. The many had appealed to the law of brute force; and the few were justified in accepting the challenge. The time for the observance of municipal formalities—of niceties of criminal procedure—of precise balancings of evidence and detailed fulness of record—had clearly now passed away. A terrible necessity had forced itself upon the rulers of the land. In the great death-struggle which had come upon us, the written law had been violated upon the one side, and it was now to be suspended upon the other. The savage had arisen against us, and it had become our work to fight the savage with his own

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weapons. So the law-makers stood up and shook themselves loose from the trammels of the law. On the 30th of May, the Legislative Council passed an act which swept away the old time-honoured seats of justice, wheresoever Rebellion was disporting itself, and placed the power of life and death in the hands of the executive officer, whatsoever his rank, his age, or his wisdom. The Act, after declaring that all persons owing allegiance to the British Government, who should rebel or wage war, or attempt to do so, against the Queen or Government of the East Indies, or instigate or abet such persons, should be liable to the punishment of death, transportation, or imprisonment, gave the Executive Government of any Presidency or Place power to proclaim any district as in a state of rebellion, and to issue a Commission forthwith for the trial of all persons charged with offences against the State, or murder, arson, robbery, or other heinous crime against person or property—the Commissioner or Commissioners so appointed were empowered to hold a Court in any part of the said district, and without the attendance or *fulwah* of a law officer, or the assistance of assessors, to pass upon every person convicted before the Court of any of the above-mentioned crimes the punishment of death, or transportation, or imprisonment; “and the judgment of such Court,” it was added, “shall be final and conclusive, and the said Court shall not be subordinate to the Sudder Court.”* This gave immense power to individual Englishmen. But it armed only the civil authorities; so an order was passed by the Governor-General in Council authorising the senior

* The Act, which received the assent of the Governor-General, and thus passed into law on the 8th of June, is given entire in the appendix.

military officer, of whatsoever rank, at any military station in the Bengal Presidency, to appoint General Courts-Martial, either European or Native, or mixed, of not less than five members, and "to confirm and carry into effect, immediately or otherwise, any sentence of such Court-Martial."

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With the new month came in further reinforcements from beyond the seas, and something like confidence was re-established in the Christian communities of Calcutta; for although rebellion was spreading itself all over Upper India, the continual stream of English troops that was beginning to pour into the capital seemed to give security to its inmates. The regiments released from service in the Persian Gulf, were now making their appearance on the banks of the Hooghly. The Sixty-fourth arrived on the 3rd of June, and soon afterwards the Thirty-fifth came in from Moulmein. And then the kilted Highlanders of the Seventy-eighth, also from Persia, were seen ascending the ghauts of Calcutta, with their red beards and their bare knees—an unaccustomed sight to the natives of Bengal, in whose eyes they appeared to be half women and half beasts. Others followed, and every effort was made to expedite their despatch to the upper country. At Raneegunge, to which point the railway ran from the neighbourhood of Calcutta, an experienced officer was making arrangements to send on detachments by horse-dawk and bullock-dawk to Benares; but the resources of the State were miserably inadequate to the necessities of the crisis, and prompt movement by land, therefore, on a large scale was wholly impossible. The journey to Benares could be accomplished in five days; but

June.
More reinforcements.

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June.

it was officially reported to Lord Canning that only from eighteen to twenty-four men a day could thus be forwarded by horsed carriages. By the 4th of June, it was computed that, by these means of conveyance, ninety men with their officers would have reached Benares; by the 8th, eighty-eight more; and by the 12th, another batch of eighty-eight. The bullock-carriages, which afforded slower means of progression, but which could carry larger numbers, might, it was calculated, convey the troops onward at the rate of a hundred men a day.* So, on the 10th of June, Lord Canning was able to write to Mr. Colvin, saying, "The Europeans are still sent up steadily at the rate of a hundred and twenty men a day, and henceforward they will not be stopped either at Benares or Allahabad, but be passed on to Cawnpore. My object is to place at Sir Hugh Wheeler's disposal a force with which he can leave his entrenchments at Cawnpore, and show himself at Lucknow or elsewhere. He will best know where when the time arrives. To this end, I call upon you to give your aid by furthering by every means in your power the despatch southwards of a portion of the European force which has marched upon Delhi." It had not yet dawned upon the Government that Delhi was not to be "made short work of" by the force that had come down from the North to attack it. And there were many others of large experience all over the country who believed that there was no power of resistance in the place to withstand the first assaults even of such an English army as Anson was gathering up and equipping for service. What that force was, and what its efforts, I have now to relate.

* Mr. Cecil Beadon to Lord Canning, May 26.—*MS. Correspondence.*

CHAPTER V.

GENERAL ANSON AT UMBALLAH—FIRST MOVEMENT OF TROOPS—THE MILITARY DEPARTMENTS—DIFFICULTY OF MOVEMENT—THE PANIC ON THE HILLS—THE SIEGE-TRAIN—REMONSTRANCES AGAINST DELAY—VIEWS OF LORD CANNING AND SIR JOHN LAWRENCE—GOOD WORK OF THE CIVILIANS—CONDUCT OF THE SIKH CHIEFS—THE MARCH TO KURNAUL—DEATH OF GENERAL ANSON—SUCCESSION OF SIR HENRY BARNARD.

DISQUIETED by reports of the uneasy nervous state of the Regiments at Head-Quarters, but little apprehending the approach of any gigantic danger, General Anson was recreating himself on the heights of Simlah, when, on the 12th of May, young Barnard rode in from Umballah bearing a letter from his father. It informed the Commander-in-Chief that a strange incoherent telegraphic message had been received at the latter place from Delhi. But it was plain that the Meerut Sepoys had revolted. An hour afterwards, another message was brought to Anson, confirming the first tidings of revolt. Confused though it was, it indicated still more clearly than its predecessor, that the Native Cavalry prisoners at Meerut had escaped from gaol, that the Sepoys thence had joined the Delhi mutineers, and that there had been at both places a massacre of Europeans.*

May 12.

At Head
Quarters.

* The first telegram, as given in a letter from Anson to Lord Canning, ran thus: "We must leave office. All the bungalows are on fire—burning down by the Sepoys of Meerut. They came in this morning. We are

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May 12.

When this intelligence reached the Commander-in-Chief, he did not at once take in its full significance; nor, indeed, did men of far greater Indian experience—the Head-quarter's Staff, by whom he was surrounded—perceive the dire purport of it. But he discerned at once that something must be done. He saw that the city of Delhi and the lives of all the Europeans were at the mercy of the insurgents; and that it was incumbent upon him to send down all the white troops that could be despatched from the Hills, to succour our imperilled people, if the flames of rebellion should spread. So he sent an Aide-de-camp to Kussowlee, on that day, with orders for the Seventy-fifth Foot to march to Umballah;* and, at the same time, the Company's European regiments at Dugshai and Sobathoo were directed to hold themselves in readiness to march at a moment's notice. But he did not put himself in motion. He wrote to Lord Canning, saying that he anxiously awaited further reports, and that if they were not favourable he should "at once proceed down to Umballah." He had scarcely despatched this letter, when a third telegraphic message was received, from which he learnt more distinctly what had happened at Meerut on the preceding Sunday. Next morning, he wrote again to Lord Canning, still saying that his

off. Mr. C. Todd is dead, I think. He went out this morning, and has not yet returned. We learnt that nine Europeans are killed." This was received at three p.m. The second message, received at four, said: "Cantonments in a state of siege. Mutineers from Meerut—Third Light Cavalry—numbers not known—said to be a hundred and fifty men. Out of communication with Meerut. Taken possession of the Bridge of

Boats. Fifty-fourth Native Infantry sent against them, but would not act. Several officers killed and wounded. City in a state of considerable excitement. Troops sent down, but nothing known yet. Information will be forwarded."

* Captain Barnard had, on his way to Simlah, warned the Seventy-fifth to be ready to march on the arrival of orders from Head-Quarters.

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May 13.

own movements would depend upon the information he received. But he was beginning to discern more clearly the magnitude of the danger, and he ordered the two Fusilier Regiments to move down to Umballah,* and the Sirmoor battalion† to proceed from Dhera to Meerut. From the first he appears to have perceived clearly that the most pressing danger which threatened us was the loss of our Magazines. He felt that the great Magazine at Delhi, with its rich supplies of arms and ordnance stores, and implements of all kinds, must already be in possession of the mutineers, and he lost no time in taking measures to secure our other great military store-houses, by sending European troops for their defence. "I have sent express," he wrote to Lord Canning on the 13th, "to desire that the Fort at Ferozapore may be secured by the Sixty-first Foot, and the Fort at Govindghur by the Eighty-first. Two companies of the Eighth from Jullundhur to Phillour." The importance of securing the latter place could scarcely, indeed, be over-estimated.‡ How it was accomplished by the authorities of the Punjab will hereafter be told. In this place it need only be recorded that thence was it that the siege-train was to be drawn which was to open the way for our re-entrance into Delhi, or to perform any other

* Major G. O. Jacob, of the First European Regiment, who happened to be at Simlah, rode down to Dug-shai during the night, and warned the regiment early in the morning.

† A corps of brave and faithful Goorkhas, whose good services will be hereafter detailed.

‡ Mr. Cave-Browne says, "A report did float about the Punjab, the truth of which we have never heard denied, that one member of the Staff suggested that all European troops

should concentrate on Phillour, and, taking boat down the Sutlej, make for England as fast as possible; another, however—one who, alas! fell among the earliest victims of the rebellion—suggested that the Phillour fort, with its large magazine, might be made available for a very different purpose. Hence the idea of a siege-train." This last was Colonel Chester, Adjutant-General of the Army.

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May.

service that circumstances might demand from it in the operations to be now undertaken. An Artillery officer was despatched thither with all speed to make the necessary arrangements;* and the Goorkah Regiment, known as the Nusserce Battalion, and then believed to be loyal to the core, was ordered down from Jutogh, near Simlah, to form, with a detachment of the Ninth Irregular Cavalry, an escort for the train from Phillour to Umballah. This was not more than any soldier of a few years' experience would have done; but as it was an important, though an obvious movement, and tended much to our subsequent success, it should be held in remembrance by all who say that in this conjuncture Anson did less.†

May 14.
First move-
ments of
General
Anson.

Before the day was spent, the Commander-in-Chief had made up his mind that he must quit Simlah. "I am just off for Umballah," he wrote to Lord Canning, at eight o'clock on the morning of the 14th. . . . "This is a most disastrous business," he added, "and it is not possible to see what will be the result. They say the King of Delhi is at the bottom of it. I doubt it; but I have no doubt that he has taken advantage of the opportunity, and is assisting the insurgents. . . . If the mutineers, having possession of the city, make their stand behind the walls, we shall want a good force and artillery. This must be collected at Kurnaul, as it would not be wise, I think, to divide the force we shall have and send part from Meerut on the opposite side of the river. But I hope to hear something which will enable me to

* Captain Worthington, who was on sick-leave at Simlah at the time.

† The author of the "History of the Siege of Delhi" says: "On the 14th Sir John Lawrence telegraphed to Jellundhar to secure the Fort of Phillour. Two marches to the south,

and commanding the bridge over the Sutlej, it contained the only magazine that could now furnish us with a siege-train, &c. &c." But it is clear that General Anson had sent instructions to this effect three days before.

decide what is best to be done when I get to Umballah."

1857.
May 15.

He reached that place on the morning of the 15th, and many sinister reports met him there. It was plain that the Native regiments in the Punjab were in a state of open or suppressed mutiny, and, therefore, that he could not expect immediate assistance from that province. "We are terribly short of artillery ammunition," he wrote. "The two companies of Reserve Artillery I asked for from Lahore and Loodhianah cannot, of course, now be given, and we have no means of using the Siege-train. All the European troops within reach will be here on the 17th. If we move upon Delhi, I think it must be from Kurnaul. It is extraordinary how little we know of what is going on in other parts of the country—nothing whatever from Agra, Cawnpore, Oudh, &c." On the following day, he wrote again to Lord Canning, saying: "I have been doing my best to organise the Force here, ready for a move; but tents and carriages are not ready, and they are indispensable. We are also deficient in ammunition, which we are expecting from Phillour. I hope we shall be in a state to move shortly, if required. But we have no heavy guns for Delhi, if we are to attack the mutineers there. We must not fritter away or sacrifice the Europeans we have, unless for some great necessity."

Many troubles and perplexities then beset him. It has been already shown that the Native Regiments at Umballah were in a state of smouldering mutiny, kept only from bursting into a blaze by the contiguity of European troops.* The incendiary work,

The Umballah Regiments.

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which, in the preceding month, had so mystified the Commander-in-Chief and the General of Division, had by this time explained itself. It was clear that the Sepoys were ripe for revolt. With the strong European force now gathered at Umballah, Anson might have reduced them to impotence in an hour. To the vigorous understanding of Sir John Lawrence nothing was clearer than that the true policy, in that conjuncture, was to disarm the Native Regiments at Umballah before advancing upon Delhi; and he impressed this necessity upon Anson by telegraph and by post from Rawul-Pindee, but the Commander-in-Chief refused to sanction the measure.* It seemed to be an easy escape out of some difficulties which beset his position at Umballah. He had the wolf by the ears. He could not with safety carry the regiments with him, and he could not leave them behind. But he was met with remonstrances from officers on the spot, who protested that some pledges had been given to the Sepoys which could not honourably be broken, though in truth the Sepoys themselves had practically violated the compact, and there would have been no breach of faith in turning their treachery against themselves. It was, however, resolved to appeal only to their good feelings, and so they were left with arms in their hands to use them on a future day foully against us in return for our forbearance.†

* See Punjab Report of May 26, 1858: "The Chief Commissioner conceived that the first step was to disarm these regiments, whom it was equally dangerous either to leave at Umballah or to take to Delhi. This course the Chief Commissioner lost no time in urging, but when the Commander-in-Chief took the matter in hand, the local military authorities pointed out that they had pledged themselves not to disarm the Sepoys.

It was in vain urged per contra that the compact had been no sooner made than it was broken by the Sepoys themselves. There was not, indeed, the shadow of a reasonable hope that these men would prove faithful."

† It should not be omitted altogether from the narrative that on the 19th the Commander-in-Chief issued another address to the Native Army, in the shape of a General

Another source of anxiety was this. Before the week had passed, news came to Umballah that the Goorkahs of the Nusseree Battalion, from no sympathy with the regular army, but from some personal causes of disaffection, had broken into revolt just when their services were wanted, had refused to march to Phillour, had plundered the Commander-in-Chief's baggage, and threatened to attack Simlah. Then there came a great cry of terror from the pleasant places which Anson had just quitted, and in which, only a few days before, the voice of joy and gladness had been resonant in a hundred happy homes. It was the season when our English ladies, some with their husbands, some without them, were escaping from the hot winds of the Northern Provinces and disporting themselves, in all the flush of renovated health and strength and new-born elasticity, under the cheering influence of the mountain breezes on the slopes of the Himalayas. It might well have been regarded, in the first instance, as a happy circumstance that so many of our countrywomen were away from the military cantonments, in which mutiny and murder had so hideously displayed themselves; but when it was known that these joyous playgrounds were being stripped of their defences, and that if danger were to threaten the homes of our

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Mutiny of the
Nussuree
Battalion.The panic on
the Hills.

Order, in which, after adverting to the general uneasiness of the Sepoys and to his former efforts to allay it, he said: "His Excellency has determined that the new rifle-cartridge, and every new cartridge, shall be discontinued, and that in future ball ammunition shall be made up by each regiment for its own use by a proper establishment entertained for this purpose. The Commander-in-Chief solemnly assures the Army that no interference with their castes or religions was ever contemplated, and

as solemnly he pledges his word and honour that none shall ever be exercised. He announces this to the Native Army in the full confidence that all will now perform their duty free from anxiety and care, and be prepared to stand and shed the last drop of their blood, as they have formerly done, by the side of the British troops, and in defence of the country." Such words in season might be good, but the season had long since passed.

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people there would be nothing but God's mercy to protect them, a feeling of insecurity and alarm arose, which needed but little to aggravate it into a great panic. When, therefore, tidings came that the Nusserce battalion, at a distance of some three or four miles from Simlah, had risen in rebellion, there was general consternation. It was rumoured that the officers and their families at Jutogh had been murdered, and that the Goorkahs were marching on Simlah intent on slaughter and spoliation. Then, for the greater part of two long days, many tasted the bitterness of death. The agony of terror swept our English families out of their holiday-homes, as with the besom of coming destruction; and in wild confusion men, women, and children streamed down towards the plains, or huddled together at the point esteemed to be best capable of defence.* Never, at any time or in any place, have the consummate gallantry of Englishmen and the heroic endurance of Englishwomen been more nobly—more beautifully—manifested than in the great conflict for supremacy, of which I am writing. But the incidents of those two days on the Hills are not to be regarded with national pride. The strong instinct of self-preservation was dominant over all. Men forgot their manhood in what seemed to be a struggle for life;† and it is not strange, therefore, that delicate ladies with little children clinging to them, should have abandoned themselves uncontrolledly to their fears.

* This was the Bank. See Cave-Browne's "Punjab and Delhi in 1857," which contains an animated account of the two days' panic on the Hills. The writer says that at the Bank were congregated some four hundred of our Christian people, "of whom above a hundred were sick-bedded men."

† Mr. Cave-Browne describes "ladies tolling along on foot, vainly trying to persuade, entreat, threaten the bearers to hurry on with their *jampans*, on which were their helpless children, while men were outbidding each other, and *outbidding ladies*, to secure bearers for their baggage."

But the panic was a groundless panic. The Nusserce battalion, though grossly insubordinate, was not intent on the murder of our people. The Goorkahs had grievances, real or supposed, to be redressed, and when certain concessions had been made to them, they returned to their allegiance, and afterwards became good soldiers.* And not without some feeling of shame our people went back to their deserted homes and found everything just as it had been left. Those, whose excited imaginations had seen blazing houses and household wrecks, re-entered their dwelling places to see with their fleshly eyes the unfinished letter on the desk and the embroidery on the work-table undisturbed by marauding hands. Even the trinkets of the ladies were as if they had never been out of the safest custody. But confidence, which is ever "a plant of slow growth," is slowest when once trampled or cut down; and it was long before our English families at the hill-stations recovered the serenity they had lost. Every officer fit for service was called to join his regiment, and the European soldiery were too much needed in the field to allow any force to be left for the protection of the tender congregation of women and children on the slopes of the great hills.†

The Commander-in-Chief had, indeed, other things to consider than these social alarms. The defection of the Nusserce battalion was a source of perplexity

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Preparation
of the Siege
Train.

* It is said that one of their principal causes of complaint was the fact that they had been ordered to march down to the plains, and that no arrangements had been made for the protection of their families in their absence. They were also in arrears of pay.

† Mr. Cave-Browne relates that as the Commander-in-Chief was riding

out of Simlah, Mr. Mayne, the Chaplain, informed him that the station was in great danger from the number of "bedmaashes" in the Bazaar, and asked that some Europeans might be sent up for its protection. The General said that he could not spare any. "What, then, are the ladies to do?" asked the Chaplain. "The best they can," was the answer.

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upon other grounds, as it was hard to say how the siege train could be escorted safely to Umballah. It was of the highest importance, at this time, that the European troops should be exposed as little as possible to the blazing heats of the summer sun. It was the sultriest season of the year, and cholera was already threatening our camp. The regiment of hardy Goorkahs, of whose loyalty there had been no previous doubt, were just the men for the work; and now their services were lost to us for a while. There was nothing, therefore, left but a resort to Hindostanee troops of doubtful fidelity, or to a contingent force supplied by a friendly Native chief. Meanwhile there was great activity in the magazine of Phillour. Day and night our troops, under Lieutenant Griffith, Commissary of Ordnance, toiled on incessantly to prepare the siege train and to supply ammunition of all kinds for the advancing army. A day, even an hour, lost, might have been fatal; for the Sutlej was rising, and the bridge of boats, by which the Train was to cross the river, might have been swept away before our preparations were complete.

The Depart-

But there were worse perplexities even than these. The elaborate organisation of the army which Anson commanded was found to be a burden and an encumbrance. The Chiefs of all the Staff-departments of the Army were at his elbow. They were necessarily men of large experience, selected for their approved ability and extensive knowledge; and it was right that he should consult them. But Departments are ever slow to move—ever encumbered with a sense of responsibility, which presses upon them with the destructive force of paralysis. These Indian Military Departments were the best possible Departments in

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time of peace. They had immense masses of correspondence written up and endorsed with the most praiseworthy punctuality and precision. They were always prepared with a precedent; always ready to check an irregularity, and to chastise an over-zealous public servant not moving in the strictest grooves of Routine. It was, indeed, their especial function to suppress what they regarded as the superfluous activities of individual men; and individual men never did great things until they got fairly out of the reach of the Departments. They were nominally War Departments. There would have been no need of such Departments if war had been abolished from off the face of the land. But it was the speciality of these War Departments that they were never prepared for war. Surrounded as we were, within and without, with hostile populations, and living in a chronic state of danger from a multiplicity of causes, we yet were fully prepared for almost anything in the world but fighting. Without long delay we could place ourselves in neither a defensive nor an offensive attitude. We could "stand fast" as well as any nation in the world, but there was never any facility of moving. As soon as ever there came a necessity for action, it was found that action was impossible. The Adjutant-General, the Quartermaster-General, the Commissary-General, the Chief of the Army Medical Department, each had his own special reason to give why the "thing" was "impossible." No ammunition—no carriages—no hospital stores—no doolies for the sick and wounded. Each head of a Department, indeed, had his own particular protest to fling in the face of the Commander-in-Chief. *Nunquam paratus* was his motto. It was the custom of Departments. It was the rule of the Service. No

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one was at all ashamed of it. It had come down by official inheritance from one to the other, and the Chief of the Department merely walked in the pleasant paths which, years before, as a Deputy Assistant, he had trodden under some defunct Chief of pious memory. In a word, it was the system. Every now and then, some seer like Henry Lawrence rose up to protest against it. And when, in the plain language of common sense, the truth was laid bare to the public, some cried, "How true!" but the many smiled incredulously, and denounced the writer as an alarmist. And so General Anson, having found things in that normal state of unpreparedness in which his predecessors had delighted, had followed in their footsteps, nothing doubting, until suddenly brought face to face with a dire necessity, he found that everything was in its wrong place. The storm-signals were up, but the life-boat was in the church-steeple, and no one could find the keys of the church.*

It was not strange, therefore, that Anson felt it would not be prudent, with the means then at his disposal, to risk "an enterprise on Delhi." "It becomes now a matter for your consideration," he wrote to Sir John Lawrence on the 17th, "whether it would be prudent to risk the small European force we have here in an enterprise on Delhi. I think not. It is wholly, in my opinion, insufficient for the purpose. The walls could, of course, be

* On the 18th of May General Bernard wrote from Umballah, saying: "And now that they [the European regiments] are collected, without tents, without ammunition, we have not twenty rounds of small arms. Two troops of Horse Artillery, twelve guns, but no reserve

ammunition, and their waggons at Loodianah—seven days' off! Commissariat without sufficient transport at hand. This is the boasted Indian Army, and this is the force with which the civilians would have us go to Delhi."—Compare also letter quoted in the text, page 165.

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battered down with heavy guns. The entrance might be opened, and little resistance offered. But so few men in a great city, with such narrow streets, and an immense armed population, who knew every turn and corner of them, would, it appears to me, be in a very dangerous position, and if six or seven hundred were disabled, what would remain? Could we hold it with the whole country around against us? Could we either stay in or out of it? My own view of the state of things now is, that by carefully collecting our resources, having got rid of the bad materials which we cannot trust, and having supplied their places with others of a better sort, it would not be very long before we could proceed without a chance of failure, in whatever direction we might please. Your telegraphic message informing me of the measures which you have taken to raise fresh troops confirms me in this opinion. I must add, also, that this is now the opinion of all here whom I have consulted upon it—the Major-General and Brigadier, the Adjutant-General, Quarter-master-General, and Commissary-General. The latter has, however, offered a positive impediment to it, in the impossibility of providing what would be necessary for such an advance under from sixteen to twenty days. I thought it could have been done in less; but that was before I had seen Colonel Thomson. Indeed, it is very little more than forty-eight hours since I came here, and every turn produces something which may alter a previous opinion.”*

* The views of General Anson at this time are thus stated in an unpublished memoir by Colonel Baird Smith, from which other quotations will be made: “It is generally understood that the course which recommended itself most to his mind

was one strongly opposed to the popular instinct at the moment. Recognising, as all conversant with military affairs could not fail to do, that strategically considered the position of a weak force at Delhi must be, if not utterly false, yet of extreme

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Correspondence with Lord Canning.

But these doubts were but of brief duration. Let Adjutants-General, and Quarter-masters-General, and Commissaries-General suggest what difficulties they might, there were other powers, to North and South, in whose sight all delay, in such a crisis, was an offence and an abomination. Lord Canning, from Calcutta, and Sir John Lawrence, from the Punjab, flashed to the Head Quarters of the Army emphatic messages, urging Anson to move on Delhi, with such force as he could gather; and followed up their eager telegrams with letters scarcely less eager. The Governor-General, to whom Anson had not communicated the views which he had expressed in the preceding letter to the Chief Commissioner of the Punjab, was overjoyed by the thought that there was so much activity at Head-Quarters. Encouraged by the earlier letters of the Military Chief, and still more by a message he had received from Mr. Colvin, at Agra, Canning wrote on the 17th to Anson, saying that he learnt the good news "with intense pleasure." "For," he added, "I doubted whether you would be able to collect so strong a body of troops in the time. I cannot doubt that it will now prove amply sufficient, and I am very grateful to you for enabling me to feel confident on this point. An unsuccessful demonstration against Delhi, or even any appearance of delay in proceeding to act, when once our force is on the spot, would have a most injurious effect—I mean in Bengal generally. Every station

danger, he is believed to have advocated the withdrawal of the small and isolated detachments on the Doab, and the concentration of the whole available British force between the Soan and the Jammu, there to await the arrival of reinforcements by the line of the Indus, and, while

permitting the fire of revolt to burn as fiercely as it might within the limits indicated, to check its spread beyond them on the northward, and ultimately to proceed to quench it with means that would make the issue certain."—*Unpublished Memoir by Colonel Baird Smith. MS.*

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and cantonment is in a state of excitement, and anything in the nature of a check would give confidence to the disaffected regiments, which might lead to something worse than the horrors of Delhi. Allahabad, Benares, Oudh (except Lucknow, which I believe to be safe), and a host of places of less importance where Native troops are alone, will continue to be a source of much anxiety until Delhi is disposed of. It is for this that I have telegraphed to you to make as short work as possible of the rebels, who have cooped themselves up there, and whom you cannot crush too remorselessly. I should rejoice to hear that there had been no holding our men, and that the vengeance had been terrible."

Whilst Lord Canning was thus expressing his gratitude to Anson, Sir John Lawrence, who was nearer the scene of action, and in closer communication with the Commander-in-Chief, knowing better what were the prevailing counsels at Head Quarters, was urgent in his remonstrances against delay. He knew the temper of the people well; and nothing was clearer to the eye of his experience than that, in the conjuncture which had arisen, it was necessary above all things to maintain an appearance of successful activity. Any semblance of paralysis at such a time must, he knew, be fatal to us. At such periods the Natives of India wait and watch. It is in conformity with the genius of a people, equally timid and superstitious, to be worshippers of success. John Lawrence knew well that if at any time the English in India should betray symptoms of irresolution in the face of danger, thousands and tens of thousands, believing that the day of our supremacy is past, would first fall away from, and then rise against their masters. But we had reached an epoch in the

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History of our great Indian Empire at which the impression of our coming fall was stronger than it had ever been before, and there were those who, on the first sign of weakness in our camp, would have pointed exultingly to the beginning of the end. It was not a time, indeed, to calculate military means and resources, or to regard strategical principles in the conduct of our armies; but simply to move and strike—to move somewhere and to strike some one. And it was to this necessity of prompt and vigorous action that the counsels of John Lawrence ever pointed—not to any particular line of procedure to be dictated to the Military Chief. “I do not myself,” he wrote to Anson, on the 21st of May, “think that the country anywhere is against us—certainly not from here to within a few miles of Delhi. I served for nearly thirteen years in Delhi, and know the people well. My belief is, that with good management on the part of the Civil officers, it would open its gates on the approach of our troops. It seems incredible to conceive that the mutineers can hold and defend it. Still, I admit that on military principles, in the present state of affairs, it may not be expedient to advance on Delhi; certainly not until the Meerut force is prepared to act, which it can only be when set free. Once relieve Meerut, and give confidence to the country, no difficulty regarding carriage can occur. By good arrangements the owners will come forward, but in any case it can be collected. From Meerut you will be able to form a sound judgment on the course to be followed. If the country lower down be disturbed, and the Sepoys have mutinied, I conceive it would be a paramount duty to march that way, relieve each place, and disarm or destroy the mutineers. If, on the other

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hand, all were safe, it would be a question whether you should consolidate your resources there, or march on Delhi. I think it must be allowed that our European troops are not placed at this or that station simply to hold it, but to be ready to move wherever they may be required. Salubrious and central points for their location were selected; but so long as we maintain our prestige and keep the country quiet, it cannot signify how many cantonments we abandon. But this we cannot do, if we allow two or three Native corps to checkmate large bodies of Europeans. It will then be a mere question of time, by slow degrees, but of a certainty the Native troops must destroy us. We are doing all we can to strengthen ourselves, and to reinforce you, either by direct or indirect means.* But can your Excellency suppose for one moment that the Irregular troops will remain staunch, if they see our European soldiers cooped up in their cantonments, tamely awaiting the progress of events. Your Excellency remarks that we must carefully collect our resources; but what are these resources, but our European soldiers, our guns, and our matériel: these are all ready at hand, and only require to be handled wisely and vigorously to produce great results. We have money also, and the control of the country. But if disaffection spread, insurrection will follow, and we shall then neither be able to collect the revenue, nor procure supplies." "Pray," he continued, "only reflect on the whole history of India. Where have we failed, when we acted vigorously? Where have we succeeded, when guided by timid counsels? Olive, with twelve hundred, fought at Plassey in

* This is to be understood as referring to the measures taken in the Punjab.

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opposition to the advice of his leading officers, beat forty thousand men, and conquered Bengal. Monson retreated from the Chumbul, and before he gained Agra, his army was disorganised and partially annihilated. Look at the Caubul catastrophe. It might have been averted by resolute and bold action. The Irregulars of the Army, the Kuzzilbashes, in short our friends, of whom we had many, only left us when they found we were not true to ourselves. How can it be supposed that strangers and mercenaries will sacrifice everything for us? There is a point up to which they will stand by us, for they know that we have always been eventually successful, and that we are good masters; but go beyond this point, and every man will look to his immediate benefit, his present safety. The Punjab Irregulars are marching down in the highest spirits, proud to be trusted, and eager to show their superiority over the Regular troops—ready to fight, shoulder to shoulder, with the Europeans. But if, on their arrival, they find the Europeans behind breastworks, they will begin to think that the game is up. Recollect that all this time, while we are halting, the emissaries of the mutineers are writing to, and visiting, every cantonment. . . . I cannot comprehend what the Commissariat can mean by requiring from sixteen to twenty days to procure provisions. I am persuaded that all you can require to take with you must be procurable in two or three. We have had an extraordinary good harvest, and supplies must be abundant between Umballah and Meerut. The greater portion of the country is well cultivated. We are sending our troops in every direction without difficulty, through tracts which are comparatively desert. Our true policy is to trust the Maharajah of Puteecala,

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and Rajah of Jheend, and the country generally, for they have shown evidence of being on our side, but utterly to distrust the regular Sepoys. I would spare no expense to carry every European soldier—at any rate, to carry every other one. By alternately marching and riding, their strength and spirits will be maintained. We are pushing on the Guides, the Fourth Sikhs, the First and Fourth Punjab regiments of Infantry, from different parts of the Punjab, in this way. If there is any officer in the Punjab whom your Excellency would wish to have at your side, pray don't hesitate to apply for him. There is a young officer now at Head Quarters, who, though young in years, has seen much service, and proved himself an excellent soldier. I allude to Captain Norman, of the Adjutant-General's office. Sir Colin Campbell had the highest opinion of his judgment; and when he left Peshawur it was considered a public loss."

Of the exceeding force and cogency of this no doubt can be entertained. It was the right language for the crisis—rough, ready, and straight to the point. The great Punjab Commissioner, with his loins girt about, eager for the encounter, impatient to strike, was not in a mood to make gentle allowances or to weigh nice phrases of courteous discourse. But, in what he wrote, he intended to convey no reproaches to the Military Chief. It was simply the irrepressible enthusiasm of a nature, impatient of departmental dallyings and regulation restraints, and in its own utter freedom from all fear of responsibility not quite tolerant of the weakness of those who, held back by a fear of failure, shrink from encountering heroic risks. It was not that he mistrusted the man Anson, but that he mistrusted all the cum-

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brous machinery of the Head-Quarters Departments, which never had been found ripe for sudden action—never had improvised an expedition or precipitated an enterprise, ever since Departments were created—though, in truth, he could not see that in the machinery itself there was anything to unfit it for prompt action. “I should greatly regret,” he wrote two days afterwards, “if any message or letter of mine should annoy you. I have written warmly and strongly in favour of an advance, because I felt assured that such was the true policy. However much we may be taken by surprise, our military organisation admits of prompt action. The country is almost sure to be with us, if it were only that we save them from trouble; and this will more especially be the case in an affair like the present, when we have really to contend only with our own troops, with whom the people can have no sympathy.” The Commissariat, in such a case, is ever the chief stumbling-block; and the impediments thrown up are those of which military men take the most, and civilians the least, account. Anson was told at Umballah that they were insuperable. But John Lawrence, at Rawul-Pindee, could not recognise the force of the obstructive argument. “I cannot comprehend,” he wrote to Anson, “why Colonel Thomson requires so much supplies. To carry so much food with the troops is to encumber the column and waste our money. To guard against accidents, three or four days’ supplies should be taken, but no more. My belief is, that ten thousand troops might march all over the North-West, and, provided they paid for what they required, no difficulty in obtaining supplies would be experienced.” It is plain, too, that at this time the Delhi difficulty was, in the Punjab,

held to be a light one, for Lawrence added: "I still think that no real resistance at Delhi will be attempted; but, of course, we must first get the Meerut force in order, and, in moving against Delhi, go prepared to fight. My impression is, that, on the approach of our troops, the mutineers will either disperse, or the people of the city rise and open their gates."*

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Whether General Anson ever recognised the fact that the conjuncture was one in which all rules of warfare must bow their necks to stern political necessity, is not very apparent; but if he still maintained his opinions as a soldier, he knew well that it was his duty to yield his judgment to the authority of the supreme Civil power; and when he received an emphatic enunciation of the views of the Governor-General, he prepared to march down upon Delhi. "I regret," he wrote to the Governor-General on the 23rd of May, "that it has not been possible to move sooner upon Delhi. The force is so small that it must not be frittered away. You say in your Telegraphic Message that Delhi must be recovered, 'but [the operations] to be undertaken by a strong British force.' There is not this in the country. We have collected all within reach. I venture to say that not an hour has been lost, and that the movement of the troops from Umballah will have been accomplished in a space of time which was not considered possible on my arrival here." And he concluded his letter by

Final orders
of the Civil
Government.

* In a previous letter (May 21) Lawrence had written: "At Delhi the Sepoys have murdered their officers and taken our guns, but even there they did not stand. No number of them can face a moderate body of Europeans fairly handled. Of late years, even when fighting under our

own banners, in a good cause, with European officers at their head, and English comrades at their side, they have seldom done anything; as mutineers they cannot fight—they will burn, destroy, and massacre, but not fight."

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saying: "I should be glad to know whether you consider the Force with which I propose to attack Delhi sufficient—and, namely, 'a strong British Force.'" He had by this time clearly calculated his available strength for the great enterprise before him—and it was this, as detailed in a letter which he wrote to General Hewitt at Meerut: "The force from Umballah consists of the Ninth Lancers, one squadron of the Fourth Lancers, Her Majesty's Seventy-fifth Foot, First European Regiment, Second European Regiment, Sixtieth Native Infantry, two troops of Horse Artillery. They are formed into two small brigades. Brigadier Halifax commands the first. . . Brigadier Jones the second brigade. Four companies of the First Fusiliers, one squadron of Ninth Lancers, two guns, Horse Artillery, were moved to Kurnaul on the 17th, and arrived on the 20th. Six companies of the First Fusiliers followed on the 21st. Her Majesty's Seventy-fifth Foot and Sixtieth Regiment of Native Infantry marched on the 22nd. One squadron Ninth Lancers and four guns will march on the 24th or 25th. The above will be at Kurnaul on the 28th. The Second Europeans, third troop third brigade of Horse Artillery will probably follow on the 26th. The whole will be at Kurnaul on the 30th. I propose then to advance with the column towards Delhi on the 1st, and be opposite to Baghput on the 5th. At this place I should wish to be joined by the force from Meerut. To reach it four days may be calculated on." "A small siege train," he added, "has left Loodianah, and is expected here on the 26th. It will require eleven days to get it to Delhi. It may join us at Baghput on or about the 6th, the day after that I have named for the junction of your force. I depend on your supplying at least one hundred and

twenty Artillerymen to work it. You will bring, besides, according to statement received, two squadrons of Carabineers, a wing of the Sixtieth Rifles, one light field battery, one troop of Horse Artillery, and any Sappers you can depend upon, and of course the non-commissioned European officers belonging to them."

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Whilst Anson was writing this from Umballah, Lord Canning was telegraphing a message to him, through the Lieutenant-Governor of Agra, announcing the reinforcements which were expected at Calcutta, and adding that everything depended "upon disposing speedily of Delhi, and making a terrible example. No amount of severity can be too great. I will support you in any degree of it." There was nothing uncertain in this sound. But it is clear that the Governor-General, in his eagerness to strike a sudden and a heavy blow at the enemy, very much under-rated the military difficulties with which Anson was called upon to contend, and believed overmuch in the facile execution of the impossible; for, on the 31st of May, he telegraphed again to the Commander-in-Chief, saying: "I have heard to-day that you do not expect to be before Delhi till the 9th (June). In the mean time Cawnpore and Lucknow are severely pressed, and the country between Delhi and Cawnpore is passing into the hands of the rebels. It is of the utmost importance to prevent this, and to relieve Cawnpore. But rapid action will do it. Your force of Artillery will enable you to dispose of Delhi with certainty. I therefore beg that you will detach one European Infantry Regiment and a small force of European Cavalry to the south of Delhi, without keeping them for operations there, so that Alighur may be recovered and Cawnpore relieved immediately. It is

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impossible to overrate the importance of showing European troops between Delhi and Cawnpore, Lucknow and Allahabad, depend upon it."

It is easy to conceive what would have been the perplexity in General Anson's mind, if he had received these instructions. The recovery of Delhi seemed to be an enterprise beyond the reach of the slender means at his disposal; but he was expected also to operate in the country beyond, and in the straits of his weakness to display strength on an extensive field of action. The Army was already on its way to Delhi. For whilst the Military Departments were protesting their inability to move the Army, the Civilians at Umballah—officially the Commissioner of the Cis-Sutlej States, and the Deputy Commissioner of the district, individually Mr. George Barnes and Mr. Douglas Forsyth—were putting forth their strength, moving all the agents beneath them, and employing the influence which their position had given them among the people to accomplish promptly and effectually the great object now to be attained. It little mattered if, at such a time, the ordinary civil business were temporarily suspended. It behoved, at such a moment, every man to be more or less a soldier. So the civil officers, not only at Umballah, but all around it, in the important country between the Jumna and the Sutlej, went to work right manfully in aid of the military authorities; collected carts, collected cattle, collected coolies, and brought together and stored in Umballah large supplies of grain for the army.* And this, too, in the

* Mr. Barnes, in his official report, has recorded that, "As soon as it was seen by the Commander-in-Chief that an onward movement should be made, a sudden difficulty

arose in the want of carriages. The Deputy-Commissionary General having officially declared his inability to meet the wants of the army, the Civil Authorities were called upon to supply

face of difficulties and impediments which would have dismayed and obstructed less earnest workmen; for ever, after the fashion of their kind, Natives of all classes stood aloof, waiting and watching the issue of events; from the capitalist to the coolie all shrunk alike from rendering active assistance to those whose power might be swept away in a day.

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May.

There were other important services, which at this time the civil officers rendered to their country; doing, indeed, that without which all else would have been in vain. In the country between the Jumna and the Sutlej were the great chiefs of what were known as the "Protected Sikh States." These states, at the commencement of the century, we had rescued by our interference from the grasp of Runjeet Singh, and ever since the time when the Rajah of Puteeah placed in the hands of young Charles Metcalfe the keys of his fort, and said that all he possessed was at the service of the British Government, those chiefs, secure in the possession of their rights, had been true to the English alliance. They had survived the ruin of the old Sikh Empire, and were grateful to us for the protection which we had afforded and the independence which we had preserved. There are seasons in the lives of all nations, when faith is weak and temptation is strong, and, for a little space, the Cis-Sutlej chiefs, when the clouds of our first trouble were lowering over us, may have been beset with doubts and perplexities and fears of siding with the weaker party. Their hesitation, however, was short-lived.

the demand. At Umballah there has ever been a difficulty to furnish cattle of any kind, the carts being of a very inferior description; however, such as they were, they had to be pressed into service, and in the course of a week, after the utmost exertions, five hundred carts, two thousand camels, and two thousand coolies were made over to the Commissariat Department; thirty thousand mounds of grain were likewise collected and stored for the Army in the town of Umballah."

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The excellent tact of Douglas Forsyth, who took upon himself the responsibility of calling upon the Maharajah of Putcealah for assistance, smoothed down the apprehensions of that chief, and he took his course manfully and consistently, never swerving from the straight path of his duty. The chiefs of Jheend and Nabha followed his example, and were equally true to the British alliance.* It was of the utmost importance, at that time, that the road from Umballah to Kurnaul should be kept open; for it was to the latter place—once a flourishing military cantonment, but at the time of which I am writing deserted and decayed—that the troops from Umballah were now marching; and there the fugitives from Delhi had mostly assembled, and something of an attempt had been made to re-establish the shattered edifice of British authority upon a fragment of the ruins of Delhi.† Above all, to hold Kurnaul was to keep open the communications between Umballah and Meerut, and so to facilitate the junction of the forces from those two points. Happily for us, in this juncture the Newab of Kurnaul, a Mahomedan

* See Mr. Barnes's report. "The first object was to provide for the safety of the Grand Trunk Road and the two stations of Thanosur and Loodhianah, which were without reliable troops. I accordingly directed the Rajah of Jheend to proceed to Kurnaul with all his available force. The Maharajah of Putcealah, at my request, sent a detachment of all arms, and three guns, under his brother, to Thanosur on the Grand Trunk Road between Umballah and Kurnaul. The Rajah of Nabha and the Newab of Malair Kotla were requested to march with their men to Loodhianah, and the Rajah of Ferozepore was desired to place himself under the orders of the Deputy

Commissioner of Ferozepore. Thus all points of the main line of road were secured, and the Rajah of Jheend was also instructed to collect supplies and carriages for the field force, to protect the station of Kurnaul, &c." It should be added that Sir John Lawrence had telegraphed on the 13th to "get the Maharajah of Putcealah to send one regiment to Thanosur and another to Loodhianah." The policy from the first was to trust the great Cis-Sutlej Chiefs. See also note in the Appendix.

† Brigadier Graves and Mr. J. C. Bas, who had effected their escape from Delhi, were the representatives of the military and civil authority.

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nobleman and land-owner of large influence in that part of the country, threw the weight of his personal power into the scales on our side*. This, doubtless, was great help to us; and when the Jheend Rajah sent down his troops to Kurnaul, the danger of a general rising of the mixed population of that part of the country had passed away. The Contingent arrived on the night of the 18th, and on the following morning the first detachment of Europeans marched into the cantonment.† Meanwhile, the Putealah Rajah was occupying Thaney-sur, on the great high road between Umballah and Kurnaul, and thus the communication between these two important points was fully secured.

At the distance of a few miles from the station of Kurnaul lies the town of Paniput, a place famous in Indian annals; for there, on the neighbouring plain, had great armies contended, and thrice with tremendous carnage the destinies of India had been decided on its battle-fields. At this point the bulk of the Jheend Contingent was now posted, and as fresh detachments of the army from Umballah marched into Kurnaul, the advanced guard pushed on to Paniput, where it was presently joined by the rear companies of the Fusileers, two more squadrons of the Lancer regiment, and four guns. The Europeans, weakened though they were by the burning heats of May, were eager for the conflict, and already there had grown up amongst them that intense hatred of the

* Mr. Baiken states, in his "Notes on the Revolt," that "When we had no military force near Kurnaul, and all men watched anxiously the conduct of each local chief, the Nowab of Kurnaul went to Mr. Le Bar and addressed him to the following effect, 'Sir, I have spent a sleepless night in meditating on the state of affairs;

I have decided to throw in my lot with yours. My sword, my purse, and my followers are at your disposal.'"

† This advanced detachment consisted of four companies of the First Fusileers, two Horse Artillery guns, and a squadron of the Ninth Lancers.

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Native races which afterwards bore such bitter fruit, for even then they were beginning to see before them evidences of the destroying hand of the Insurgent.

May 27.
Death of
General
Anson.

With the last of the European Regiments General Anson left Umballah, on the 25th of May; and, on the 26th, he was lying at Kurnaul, helpless and hopeless, on the bed of death, in the mortal agonies of the great pest of the country. On the following day, Sir Henry Barnard arrived in Camp, a little after midnight, just in time, as he said, to receive the dying farewell of his chief. Anson was all but gone; but he recognised his friend, and, in a faint voice, articulated: "Barnard, I leave you the command. You will say how anxious I have been to do my duty. I cannot recover. May success attend you. God bless you. Good-bye."* And another hour had not spent itself before General George Anson had passed beyond the reach of all human praise or censure. The great responsibility thrown upon the Chief-Commander had filled him with mental anxiety, which had increased the depressing influences of over-fatigue and exposure to the climate in the most trying season of the year. He had evinced much tender consideration for the health of his men, and he was one of the first to be struck down by the fiery blasts of the Indian summer. He was a brave soldier and an honest gentleman; and another brave soldier and honest gentleman, whilst the corpse lay unburied in the next room, wrote a letter, saying: "I solemnly declare to you on my character as an officer, who, at all events, came to this country with the prestige of recent service with him, that not an hour has been lost in getting the

* Letter of Sir H. Barnard to one A.M. on the 27th; at 2.15 he Sir Charles Yorke, May 27, 1857. breathed his last." Cholera was the "This," he adds, "was at half-past immediate cause of his death.

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May.

small force now advanced as far as Paniput, and I hope to keep pushing on, as fast as I can get them up, on Delhi. The day I heard of the disaster at Delhi—which at Umballah preceded any account from Meerut—I immediately despatched my son, who rode to Simlah during the night to warn the Commander-in-Chief, and bring him down. He has himself detailed all his movements to you, and I cannot but entertain hope, had he lived, you would have taken a different view of his conduct, and not attributed any want of energy to him. Whatever might have been accomplished by an immediate rush from Meerut could not be expected from Umballah. The European troops were all in the Hills. Nothing but three regiments of Native troops and some Artillery Europeans were at the latter place; and when the Regiments on the Hills were assembled, the General was met by protests against his advance by the leading Staff and Medical Officers of his Army. The Commissariat declared their utter inability to move the troops; the Medical men represented theirs to provide the requisite attendants and bearers. Still matters went on. Troops were moved as fast as could be done, and arrangements made to meet the difficulty of bearers. Ammunition had to be procured from Phillour, for the men had not twenty rounds in their pouches, and none in store; and the Artillery were inefficient, as their reserve waggons were all at Loodhiannah. It is only this day that I expect the necessary supply of ammunition to arrive at Umballah. I have determined (I say I, for poor Anson could only recognise me and hand me over the command when I arrived last night) not to wait for the siege-train.*

* Sir Henry Barnard to Sir John Lawrence, May 27, 1857. MS.

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May.
General Bar-
nard in com-
mand.

Thus passed away from the scene one of its chief actors, just as the curtain had risen on the great drama of British action. With what success Anson might have played his distinguished part can now be only conjectured. There are those who believe that alike in wisdom and integrity he far outshone all his colleagues in the Supreme Council, and that when the crisis arrived he took in the situation and measured the work to be done with an accuracy and precision which none beside, soldier or civilian, brought to bear upon the opening incidents of the War.* Little time was allowed to him to recover from the first shock of the storm before it overwhelmed and destroyed him. But it would be unjust to estimate what he did, or what he was capable of doing, by the measuring-rod of those who, during that eventful fortnight, believed that the recovery of Delhi was to be accomplished by the prompt movement of a small and imperfectly equipped British force. It is not in cotemporary utterances that we are to look for a just verdict. We must put aside all thought, indeed, of what even the wisest and the strongest said in the first paroxysm of perplexity, when all men looked to the Chief of the Army to do what then seemed to be easy, and found that it was not done. How difficult it really was will presently appear. And though the result of a sudden

* See the statements of the author of the "Red Pamphlet." "It was a common practice to sneer at General Anson as a mere Horse Guards' General, as one who had gained his honours at Newmarket. But it is nevertheless a fact that this Horse Guards' General, by dint of application and perseverance, made himself so thoroughly a master of his profession, that, when the mutiny broke out, he drew up a plan of operations, which his successor, a German General, carried out in all its details,

rejecting as crude and ridiculous the suggestions sent up by the collective wisdom of Calcutta." History may not unwillingly accept this; but when it is said that General Anson, "when brought, in both the Councils"—that is, the Executive and Legislative Councils—"face to face with men who had made legislation for India the study of their lives, distanced them all," one cannot help being somewhat startled by the boldness of the assertion.

blow struck at Delhi might have been successful, it is impossible, with our later knowledge of subsequent events to guide us, not to believe that in the month of May the risk of failure was greater than the fair prospect of success. And we may be sure that if Anson had flung himself headlong upon the stronghold of the enemy and failed, he would have been stigmatised as a rash and incapable general, ignorant of the first principles of war.

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Perhaps the judgment of Lord Canning on these initial delays and their causes may be accepted as sound and just. "The protracted delay," he wrote, "has been caused, as far as I can gather from private letters from General Anson since I last wrote, by waiting for the siege-train, and by want of carriage for the Europeans. As regards the siege-train, I believe it to have been an unwise delay. We shall crush Delhi more easily, of course; but I do not believe that we should have been exposed to any reverse for want of a siege-train, and the time lost has cost us dear indeed. As to the carriage and Commissariat, it is impossible, in the absence of all information, to say how far the delay was avoidable and blameable. It would have been madness to move a European force at this season with any deficiency of carriage (with cholera, too, amongst them), but I greatly doubt whether General Anson was well served in this matter of carriage. From many letters from Head Quarters which have been before me, I am satisfied that, with the exception of one young officer,* there was not a man on the Army Staff who gave due thought to the political dangers of delay and to

Summing up
of Lord Canning.

* It need scarcely be said that the officer here indicated was Captain, now (1869) Colonel, Norman, who has abundantly justified all the high opinions of his character then entertained.

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the perils which hung over us elsewhere as long as no move was made upon Delhi. With the Staff, the Medical Staff especially, arguing the necessity of completeness, and none of them apparently conscious of the immense value of time, it is very probable that time was lost. On this subject you will see a letter from Sir John Lawrence to the Commander-in-Chief. It is very earnest and practical, like all that comes from him, and I wish with all my heart that he had been nearer to Head Quarters. His counsels and his thorough knowledge of the country would have been invaluable. You must bear in mind, however, in regard to his estimate of the time which should have been sufficient to put the army in motion, that a great change was made in the Commissariat three years ago, when the Transport establishments were given up, and it was determined to trust henceforward to hiring beasts for the occasion. We are now making the first experiment of this change. Economically, it was a prudent one, and in times of ordinary war might work well; but I shall be surprised if General Anson were not greatly impeded by it. Could it have been foreseen that our next operations would be against our own regiments and subjects, no sane man would have recommended it."

From the death-bed of General Anson Sir Henry Barnard had received his instructions to take command of the Delhi Field Force. And taking that command, he cast up at once the difficulties of his position. He thought that if Anson's death had not been accelerated, his last moments had been embittered, by the reproaches of eager-minded civilians, who could not measure military difficulties as they are measured by soldiers; and he felt that, in the

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execution of his duty to his country, he might bring like censure upon himself. He was in a novel and wholly unanticipated position,* and he felt that he was expected to do what was impossible. But he went resolutely at the work before him; and flung himself into it with an amount of energy and activity which excited the admiration and surprise of much younger men. He determined, on the morning of the 27th, not to wait for the siege-train, but, after exchanging his six-pounders for eight-pounders, to march on to Delhi, forming a junction on the way with the Meerut force under Brigadier Wilson. "So long as I exercise any power," he wrote to Lawrence on the day after Anson's death, "you may rest assured that every energy shall be devoted to the objects I have now in view, viz., concentrating all the force I can collect, at Delhi, securing the bridge at Baghpat, and securing our communications with Meerut. For those objects all is now in actual motion. The last column left Umballah last night, and the siege-train will follow under escort, provided by Mr. Barnes. I have noticed to the Commissariat that supplies will be required, and hope that, when within two days' march of Delhi, our presence may have the influence you anticipate, and you may soon hear of our being in possession of the place." On the 31st he wrote from Gurrounda: "I am preparing with the Commanding Engineer the plan of the position to take up

* "It is a novel position," he wrote to Sir John Lawrence, "for an officer to find himself placed in who comes to the country prepared to treat its army as his own; to make every allowance for the difference of constitution; to encourage its past good deeds and honourable name; to

have 'side blows of reproof,' because he has not treated them with the utmost severity and rather sought occasion to disgrace than endeavour to support them. That I have endeavoured to support them I fully admit, and, if a fault, I must bear the blame."—*M.S. Correspondence.*

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when we reach Delhi, and hope that no let or hindrance will prevent our being ready to act upon the place by the 5th."

The force from Unballah was now in full march upon Delhi. The scorching heat of the summer, which was taking terrible effect upon the health of the European soldiery, forbade much marching in the daytime. The fierce sun beat down upon the closed tents of our people, and as they lay in weary sleep, or vainly courting it, there was stillness, almost as of death, in our camp. But with the coolness of evening Life returned. The lassitude was gone. Men emerged from their tents and were soon in all the bustle and preparation of the coming march. The clear starlit nights are said to have been "delicious."* But as the English soldier marched on beneath that great calm canopy of heaven, there was within him the turmoil and the bitterness of an avenging thirst for blood. It fared ill with those against whom charges were brought of inflicting injury upon fugitives from Delhi. Some villagers, believed to be thus guilty, were seized, tried, condemned, and executed amidst every possible indignity that could be put upon them by our soldiers under the approving smiles of their officers.† And ever as they marched on, there was an eager desire to find criminals and to execute judgment upon them; and it was not easy for the hands of authority to restrain the retributive impulses of our people.

* See the "History of the Siege of Delhi, by One who Served there" for a very animated account of the march.

† "The fierceness of the men increased every day, often venting itself on the camp-servants, many of whom ran away. The prisoners,

during the few hours between their trial and execution, were unceasingly tormented by the soldiers. They pulled their hair, pricked them with their bayonets, and forced them to eat cow's flesh, while officers stood by approving."—*History of the Siege of Delhi by One who Served there.*

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The day of action was now not far distant; and all believed that it would be a day of signal retribution. "Most of the men," it has been said, "believed that one battle would decide the fate of the mutinous regiments. They would fight in the morning; they would drink their grog in Delhi at night."* Even the sick, in the hospital tents, sat up, declared that they were well, and with feeble voices implored to be discharged that they might be led against the hated enemy. But Barnard's force was weak, and impatient as were his troops to push forward, it was necessary that they should form a junction with Wilson's brigade, which was advancing from Meerut, on the other side of the river. What that brigade had done since the disastrous night of the 10th of May must now be briefly related.

* "The History of the Siege of Delhi, by One who Served there."

CHAPTER VI.

STATE OF MEERUT—THE SAPPERS AND MINERS—DEFENCE OF ROORKHEE—
COLONEL BAIRD SMITH—MUTINY OF THE SAPPERS—MARCH OF WILSON'S
BRIGADE—BATTLES OF THE HINDUN—JUNCTION WITH BARNARD—BATTLE
OF BUDLEE-KA-SERAI—POSITION BEFORE DELHI.

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Meerut after
the Outbreak.
May 12—27.

ON the day after that dreadful night at Meerut, which witnessed the first horrors of the revolt, it was the effort of the authorities to concentrate all the surviving Europeans, and such property as could be saved, within the English quarter of the great Cantonment. All the outlying picquets and sentries were therefore recalled; and all who lived beyond the new line of defence were brought in and lodged in a capacious public building used as the Artillery School of Instruction, and known as the Dumdumma. There also the treasure was brought from the Collectorate, and safely guarded against the plunderers, who were roving about the place. For the predatory classes were now making high festival, the escaped convicts from the gaols, the Goojurs from the neighbouring villages, and all the vile scum and refuse of the bazaars were glorying in the great paralysis of authority which had made crime so easy and so profitable. From the Cantonment the great harvest of rapine stretched out into the surrounding district. There was no respect of persons, races, or creeds. All who had anything to lose and lacked

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strength to defend it, were ruthlessly despoiled by the marauders. Travellers were stopped on the highway; the mails were plundered; houses were forcibly entered and sacked, and sometimes all the inmates butchered.* And so entirely had all semblance of British authority disappeared, that it was believed that the English in Meerut had been slain to a man.†

Meanwhile, with the proverbial rapidity of evil tidings, news had travelled up from Delhi, which left no doubt of the total defeat of the English, the Proclamation of the Padishah, and the concentration of the rebel troops, who, it was believed, would soon return to Meerut with all the immense resources of the great magazine at their command. And presently fugitives came in with the sad details of mutiny and massacre, and exciting narratives of their own providential escapes.‡ All this increased the

* Take the following illustration from the Official Report of Mr. Commissioner Williams: "Ram-dyal, a prisoner confined in the Civil Gaol under a decree for arrears of rent, hastened to his village, Bhoj-poor, during the night of the 10th, and the next day at daybreak collected a party and attacked a money-lender, who had a decree against him, and murdered him and six of his household."

† See description of the state of Meerut after the outbreak given by Major G. W. Williams in his "Narrative of Events:" "I found the whole of the station south of the Nullah and Begum's Bridge abandoned, for here the storm that was to shake India to its basis first broke out, and the ravages there visible were, strange to say, not accomplished by hands of soldiery formidable from their arms and discipline, but by mobs of wretched rabble (hundred of whom would have been instantaneously scattered by a few rounds of grape), and this in the face of an overwhelming European

force. The General of Division, with several officers, inhabited one of the Horse Artillery barracks, whilst most of the residents occupied the Field Magazine, now universally known as the far-famed Dum-Dumma, an enclosed space of about two hundred yards square, with walls eight feet high, a ditch and four bastions at each corner. Thus strengthened, it was defensible against any number of rabble insurgents unprovided with heavy guns or mortars. So completely were the rest of the cantonments deserted, that many Natives believed that every European had been exterminated, and their power being unseen, unfelt, was readily supposed to have been subverted."

‡ Among those who escaped from Delhi, but perished on the way, was the gallant leader of the little party that defended the great Delhi Magazine. It is stated that Willoughby was murdered, with several companions, by the inhabitants of a village near the Hindun river.

1857. general consternation. It was plain now that there
 May. was wide-spread revolt. All civil authority was practically suspended; so Martial Law was proclaimed in the joint names of General Hewitt and Mr. Greathed; and the first who tasted the ready justice of the improvised gallows was the butcher from the bazaar, who had brutally murdered Mrs. Chambers in her house. But this seems to have been an isolated act of vigour, due rather to the energy of an individual than to the joint authority from which the edict had proceeded.*

The Sappers
 and Miners.

On the 16th an incident occurred which increased the general consternation. Sixty miles from Meerut, on the banks of the Jumna, lies Roorkhee, the Headquarters of the Engineering science of the country. There the great Thomason College, with its famous workshops, was in all the bustle and animation of its varied mechanical industry. There was the centre of the Irrigation Department, whence issued the directing authority that controlled the great system of Canal Works which watered the thirsty land. There, too, was posted the regiment of Sappers and Miners—trained and educated native military Engineers under European officers. It was a great thriving bee-hive; and that month of May found the workers in all their wonted peaceful activity, with plans and projects suited to the atmosphere of quiet times, and no thought of coming danger to disturb the even tenor of daily life. "No community in the world," wrote one, who may be said to have been the chief of this prosperous colony, "could have been living in greater security of life and property," when

Baird Smith.

Major Fraser, who commanded the Sappers and Miners, received an express from the General at Meerut, ordering him to proceed by forced marches to that station, as the Sepoy regiments were in open revolt. When intelligence of this summons reached Colonel Baird Smith, he at once suggested that the regiment should be despatched by the route of the Ganges Canal. To this Fraser readily agreed; and within six hours boats were prepared sufficient for the conveyance of a thousand men. The regiment mustered only seven hundred and thirteen, who were equipped and ready for the journey, when another express came ordering two companies to stand fast at Roorkhee, for the protection of that place. So eventually some five hundred men set out, under Fraser, for Meerut.

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Then came to Roorkhee the news of the Delhi massacre. And as the Sappers were moving down to Meerut, Baird Smith was making admirable arrangements for the defence of the great engineering dépôt, in which he took such earnest and loving interest. Officially, he was Superintendent-General of Irrigation in the North-Western Provinces; a most useful functionary, great in all the arts of peace, and with a reputation which any man might be proud to possess. But the man of much science now grew at once into the man of war, and Roorkhee became a garrison under his command. Not an hour was lost.*

The Defence
of Roorkhee

* "It was at daybreak that I received the first intimation of the Meerut mutiny and massacre. When I went to the porch of my house to mount my horse for a morning ride, I found Medlicott, our geological professor, sitting there, looking oppressed with some painful intelligence, and, on my asking what the matter was, he then told me that about an hour before, Fraser, the

Commandant of the Sappers and Miners, had received an express from the General at Meerut, ordering him to proceed by forced marches to that place. I immediately suggested the Ganges Canal route instead of forced marches, which would have fatigued the men much, and made them unfit for service."—*M.S. Correspondence of Col. Baird Smith.*

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May.

Those indeed were times when to lose an hour might be to lose everything; and Baird Smith knew that there was no emergency against which he might not be called upon to provide. Even the companies of Sappers, which had been left for the defence of Roorkee, might soon become a source of infinite danger. It was soon settled that the workshops should become the citadel, to which women and children might be removed; and there, on the 16th of May, all these helpless ones, little less than a hundred* in number, were comfortably accommodated in the several rooms, whilst to each of our male people some fitting duty was assigned. Their number was not much greater than that of the women and children; and half of them were non-combatants, clerks attached to the establishment, and little accustomed to the use of arms. The trained soldiers were but about fifty† in number, with eight or ten good officers; and of these Baird Smith took the command, telling them off into different guards, and organising different departments, so that nothing was omitted or neglected that could add to the defence of the place.

The Sapper companies, suspected of disloyalty from the first, were placed under their officers in charge of the College buildings. Baird Smith had talked to some of their leading men, endeavouring to allay the obvious excitement among them by friendly explanations and assurances; and after that, he said, "I could do no more." The wretched story of the bone-dust flour was rife amongst them, and there was a vague fear, as in other places, of a meditated attack

* There were on the 28th of May fifty women and forty-three children, according to the Disposition List of the Roorkee Garrison of that day.

† Baird Smith, in a letter dated

May 30th, says that the trained soldiers were only about thirty, but the numbers given in the text is on the authority of the nominal roll of the garrison.

by the British, taking them by surprise, disarming, and then destroying them. In such a state of feeling every circumstance of an exceptional character is misinterpreted into an indication of offence, and when it was known to the Sappers at Roorkee that the Sirmoor Battalion—a regiment of Goorkahs commanded by Major Charles Reid—was coming down from Dhera, on its way to Meerut,* a terrible suspicion took possession of them; they believed it was a hostile movement against themselves. When this became known to Baird Smith, he sent an express to Reid requesting him not to march upon Roorkee, but to make straight for the Canal, and at once to embark in the boats that were waiting for him. Reid grasped the position at once, and acted upon the suggestion. Pretending that he had missed his way, he asked for a guide to lead him straight to the banks of the Canal, and so they marched on to the boats without increasing the general alarm. And, said Reid, Baird Smith “was right beyond doubt, and his good judgment and forethought may have been—indeed, I feel pretty sure was—the means of saving the place and the lives of the ladies and children.”†

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May.

Meanwhile, the main body of the Sappers, under

Mutiny of the
Sappers.

* Immediately on receiving intelligence of the state of affairs at Meerut, Baird Smith had written to Major Reid, warning him that his services would most probably be required at that place, and offering to provide boats for the regiment. A day or two afterwards the summons came from Head-Quarters.

† Major Reid has recorded that whilst he was embarking his Goorkahs—“almond-eyed Tartars,” as Baird Smith described them—several men of the Sappers came from Meerut and entered into communication with them. “I took no notice at first,”

he adds, “but as soon as they moved on, I called up a couple of my men and asked them what the Sappers had said to them. One little fellow replied, ‘They wanted to know if we were going over to Meerut to eat the ottah (fleur) sent up especially for the Goorkahs by the Governor-General; that the ottah at Meerut was nothing but ground bullocks’ bones.’ ‘And what was your reply?’ I asked. ‘I said,’ was the answer, ‘the regiment was going wherever it was ordered—we obey the bugle-call.’”

1857.
May 15.

Major Fraser, had marched into Meerut. Not without some feelings of suspicion and alarm, they had moved down the great Canal; but their behaviour had, on the whole, been orderly, and when, on the 15th, they arrived at their destination, there was no reason to doubt their fidelity. Brought, however, into the immediate presence of a large body of European troops, who had the blood of their slaughtered countrymen to avenge, they were in that excitable, inflammable state, which needs only a single spark to draw forth the latent fire. It soon fell. It seems that the Commandant had promised them that they should retain charge of their own ammunition. He had no intention of breaking faith with them; but he desired that, for greater security, it should be stored in a bomb-proof building, which had been placed at his disposal. If the object of this had been carefully explained to the men, they would probably have assented without a murmur. But when, on the day after their arrival, the ammunition was being conveyed to its destination, the Sepoys suspected treachery, resented the removal of the magazine, stopped the laden carts, and broke into open mutiny. An Afghan Sepoy fired his piece from behind the Commandant, and Fraser fell, shot through the back. Others fired at Adjutant Mansell, but missed him; and the Native non-commissioned officer who was in attendance on Fraser was killed in the affray. Having done this, the mutineers broke and fled, but their victory was but short-lived. A troop of the Carabineers and some Horse-Artillery guns were let loose upon them. The greater number escaped; but some fifty of the fugitives were overtaken outside cantonments among the sand-hills, and were killed. And so the Sappers and Miners, as a regiment, ceased to

exist. Two companies, however, which were at work in another part of Meerut, were disarmed, and set to work on the fortification of the Dum-Dumma. 1857.
May 15—24.

After this, there was, for a time, a lull at Meerut. The destruction of the Sappers was, perhaps, regarded as a cause of congratulation and a source of confidence, and as the advancing month brought with it no new alarms, and it seemed that the mutineers were resolved to concentrate their strength at Delhi, and not to emerge thence—as people whose fighting powers were greater behind walls—things began gradually to assume a cheerful complexion, and the inmates of the Artillery School ceased to tremble as they talked of what was to come. But there was vexation in high places. The telegraph line between Meerut and Agra was sometimes, if not always open; and Lieutenant-Governor Colvin, who never could lose sight of the fact that there were a battalion of English Rifles, a regiment of English Dragoons, and two batteries of English Artillery at Meerut, was constantly urging them, for God's sake, to do something. Thinking, after a while, that it was quite useless to exhort General Hewitt to put forth any activity in such a case, Colvin addressed himself to Brigadier Wilson, thus virtually setting aside the General of Division. Nettled by this, Hewitt telegraphed to Agra respectfully to request that the Lieutenant-Governor would transmit through him orders to his subordinates when such a step could cause no delay. But the Lieutenant-Governor still continued to telegraph to the Brigadier, beseeching him to go out in force so as to keep open the main road and to prevent dangerous combinations of revolted troops throughout the Doab. "What plan," he had asked, "does

Inactivity at
Meerut.

1857. May 15—24. Brigadier Wilson propose for making the Meerut force actively useful in checking an advance down the Doab? If the mutineers leave Delhi in force, it is plain that no wing of a corps, or even a single corps could stay their march. Therefore a move in strength to Bolundshuhur seems to be the right one." And now the Agra authorities continued to urge these movements, but were met by protests that it would be inexpedient to divide the force. "The only plan," said Wilson, "is to concentrate our European force, and to attack Delhi. He had consulted," he said, "with all the European officers in the force, and they were unanimously of opinion that any movement of the force from Meerut would be highly imprudent without the orders of the Commander-in-Chief, as it might counteract any movement that he might be forming." "To move in full strength," he added, "would involve the abandonment of all the sick, women and children and []."^{*} Then came the inevitable story that "the Commissariat report that they cannot supply carriage for a force of half the strength;" and yet it was, numerically, but a small force that would have taken the field.* So Colvin yielded the point, and no longer looked to Meerut for assistance

It has been shown that, as one result of the inactivity of this beautiful force of all arms, a belief gained ground in the adjacent country that the English at Meerut had all been killed to a man. Although the surrounding villages were swarming with robber-clans, who had murdered our people and sacked our

* In this telegraphic message it is stated that the force consisted of—Rifles, 700; Carabineers, mounted, 880; dismounted, 100; Artillery recruits, undrilled, 364. As some

portion of the efficient, and all the inefficient men would have been left in Meerut, the number for field-service would not have exceeded 1000.

houses, it was not until the 24th of May, two weeks after the great tragedy, that a small party of our Dragoons was sent out to chastise the inmates of one of these nests of plunderers. On that day, for the first time, the English magistrate, Mr. Johnston, obtained the assistance of troops to enable him to suppress the overflowing crime of the district. The village of Ikteeapore was then burnt, and the people learnt that English soldiers were still alive in Meerut. But the demonstration was an ill-fated one. For Johnston, who had gone out with the troops, riding homewards in hot haste, when the work was done, eager to be again actively employed, was fearfully injured by the falling of his horse, and three days afterwards expired.

1857.

May 24.

Death of Mr.
Johnston.

But the Meerut Brigade had now done with in-William action. The "orders of the Commander-in-Chief," ^{Hodson.} for which it had been waiting, had arrived.* It had been supposed for some time that the road between Kurnaul and Meerut was closed; but in the camp of the Commander-in-Chief there was an officer, equal to any difficult work, who volunteered to carry despatches to the latter place, and to bring back the much-needed information of the state of Wilson's Brigade. This was Lieutenant William Hodson, a man of rare energy of character, who was then serving with the First (Company's) Fusiliers. He had been, years before, one of that little band of pioneers who, under Henry Lawrence, had cleared the way for the civilisation of the Punjab, and he had afterwards risen to the command of that famous Guide Corps, the institution of which had been one

* See ante, p. 158.

1857.
May.

of the most cherished and the most successful projects of his accomplished chief. But, amidst a career of the brightest promise, a heavy cloud had gathered over him, and he had rejoined his old regiment as a subaltern, chafing under a sense of wrong, and eager to clear himself from what he declared to be unmerited imputations upon his character.* This gloom was upon him when General Anson, discerning his many fine qualities, offered him a place in the Department of the Quartermaster-General, and especially charged him with the intelligence branch of its duties, in prosecution of which he was to raise a body of a hundred horse and fifty foot.† This was at Umballah, to which place he had marched down with his regiment from Dugshai. He was soon actively at work. He hastened down to Kurnaul, and there picking up some horsemen of the Jheend Rajah's Contingent, rode into Meerut, a distance of seventy-six miles, delivered his despatches, took a bath, a break-

* It would not consort with the nature of this work to enter into an elaborate inquiry into the justice or injustice of the treatment to which Lieutenant Hodson was subjected by Lord Dalhousie's Government. It is right, however, to state that some misapprehension appears to prevail as to the alleged offence on account of which the Commandant of the Guides, who was also a Deputy Commissioner in the Peshawar district, was removed to his regiment. He was not removed from the command of the Guides in consequence of any irregularity in his accounts, but he was removed altogether from the Punjab on account of his treatment of an influential Buzofzye chief. It was the Court of Directors that decreed him to be unfit to hold any office of trust. And I must protest strongly against the charges brought by Lieutenant Hod-

son's fraternal biographer against certain high Punjabee officials, including Sir Herbert Edwardes, who has gone to his rest whilst this volume has been growing under my pen. It is impossible to believe that such men were influenced by feelings of envy, hatred, and all uncharitableness. Indeed, Mr. Hodson in no small measure furnishes his own refutation of such charges, when he says in one sentence that his brother was disliked because he was a protégé of Sir Henry Lawrence, and in another that Sir Herbert Edwardes was his chief opponent. Edwardes was the last man in India to be prejudiced against a favourite of Henry Lawrence.—See a further note in the Appendix.

† This order was subsequently extended to the raising of "an entire new Regiment of Irregular Horse."

1857.
May 27.

fast, and a little sleep, and then rode back with papers for the Commander-in-Chief. Meanwhile, the bulk of the Meerut brigade was in the bustle of preparation for an advance, under Wilson, to join the column which was moving down from the hills to the attack of Delhi. Many then, who had chafed under the restraints of the past fortnight, took fresh heart, and panted with the excitement of coming action. In high spirits, the troops marched out of cantonments on the night of the 27th of May. The column consisted of two squadrons of the Carabineers; a wing of the Sixtieth Rifles; Scott's light field-battery; Tombs's troop of Horse Artillery; two eighteen-pounder guns, all manned by Europeans; with some Native Sappers and Irregular Horse. Brigadier Archdale Wilson commanded the force, and Mr. Hervey Greathed accompanied it as civil officer. And with them rode, at the head of an improvised body of Horse, Jan Fishan Khan, the Afghan chief, who, unlike most of his countrymen, thought that he was bound to do something in return for the British pension, which supported him and his house.*

The marches of the two first days were uneventful. May 30.
No enemy appeared, and Greathed believed that the rebel force would not attempt to give us battle except before the walls of Delhi. But when, on the 30th of May, Wilson's force reached Ghazee-ooddeen Nuggur,† near the river Hindun; there were

The battles
on the
Hindun.

* The feeling generally, at this time, and in some instances the conduct, of the Afghan pensioners, of whom there was quite a colony in Loodhiana, denoted the ingratitude of the race. See Mr. Ricketts's interesting Loodhiana report, "Papers relating to the Mutiny in the Punjab, 1857."

† The position is thus described

by Baird Smith in the unpublished fragment of history, to which I have above referred: "This town, of respectable size, and with some ancient traces of walls, stands on the left bank of the Hindun, about a mile from that river. A long causeway carries the grand trunk road across the broad valley, within which the stream, shrunk during the scorching

1857.
May 30.

signs of a coming struggle. Flushed with success, and confident in their strength, the mutineers had left their stronghold, and had come on to give battle to the Meerut Brigade before its junction with the force from Umballah. They had planted some heavy guns on a ridge to the right of their position, and from this point they opened fire upon our people. Then the eighteen-pounders, under Light, and Scott's field battery, made vigorous answer, and under their cover the British riflemen advanced, and moving along the causeway, came to close quarters with the enemy. For some time a stubborn conflict was maintained; but our Horse Artillery, under Henry Tombs, supported by the Carabineers, dashed to the right, crossed the Hindun, making light of its rugged bank and dangerous bed, and successfully turned the left flank of the enemy. Under the galling fire then poured in upon them the mutineers reeled and staggered, and presently broke. Some took refuge in a village, whence they were driven by our Riflemen, and soon the whole body of the enemy were in ignominious flight towards the walls of Delhi. Five of their guns fell into our hands, and they left many of their fighting men behind them. Our own loss would have been small, but for the explosion of an ammunition-waggon; not by an accident of warfare, but by an act of resolute and sacrificial courage on the part of one of the mutineers. A Sepoy of the Eleventh Regiment deliberately discharged his musket into the

heats of May to a mere rivulet, wanders in a channel of extreme tortuosity, fordable both by infantry and artillery, though, from the prevalence of quicksands, the process is not altogether free from risk of mishap. A suspension bridge spans the stream, and on the right bank the causeway is covered by a toll-house,

capable, if need were, of some defence. Villages, furnishing considerable means of resistance in their mud-walled houses and narrow lanes, are scattered at intervals along the road, and the ground in ridges of sensible magnitude on both banks, but especially on the right."

midst of the combustibles just as a party of the Rifles, under Captain Andrews, were gallantly seizing the gun to which the cart belonged. The explosion cost the man his life; but Andrews and some of his followers were killed by it, and others were carried wounded from the scene.* It taught us that among the mutineers were some brave and desperate men, who were ready to court instant death for the sake of the national cause. Many acts of heroism of this kind brighten up the history of the war, and many more were, doubtless, performed, of which History has no record.

1857.
May 30.

The mutineers fled in hot haste to Delhi, where they were reviled for their disgraceful failure, and sent back reinforced, to try whether Fortune would help them on another day. Stimulated by promises of large rewards to achieve a great success in honour of the restored monarchy, they again marched to the Hindun. That day was our Whit-Sunday. There was no Church parade. But the morning was ushered in by the most solemn and beautiful of all our Church services—that of the Burial of the Dead. There was genuine sorrow for those who had fallen as they were laid in unconsecrated ground, “a babool tree and a milestone marking the spot.”† Little space was then left for mournful reflections. It was soon known that the Sepoys were returning to the attack. About noon our bugles sounded the alarm. The enemy had taken up a position on the ridge to the right of the Hindun, about a mile from our advanced

May 31.

* “The officers that night drank in solemn silence to the memory of the brave departed, and from the manner in which the toast was proposed by Dr. James, the surgeon of the regiment, and received by every officer and member of the mess, I am

sure, from his gallantry and other estimable qualities, that the memory of poor Andrews will be long and fondly cherished by them.” — *The Chaplain's (Mr. Rotton's) Narrative.*

† Chaplain's Narrative.

1857.
May 31.

posts on the bridge. Pushing forward his guns, he opened a heavy fire upon Wilson's force. This was a signal for our advance. The Artillery were sent forward to reply to the enemy's fire—the Rifles, with two of Scott's guns, occupying the head of the bridge. The battle, which then raged for some two hours, was almost wholly an Artillery fight.* But Cavalry and Infantry were exposed both to the fire of the enemy, and to the more irresistible assaults of the sun. It was the last day of May, one of the hottest days of the year. The fiery blasts of the summer were aggravated by the heat thrown from the smouldering embers of the burnt villages. The thirst of our people was intolerable. Some were smitten down by sun-stroke; others fell exhausted by the way; and there is a suspicion that some were destroyed by water poisoned by the enemy.† But, in spite of all these depressing circumstances, Wilson's troops drove the enemy from their position. When the fire of the mutineers had somewhat slackened, the Brigadier ordered a general advance of his force, and the Sepoys recoiled before it. But although they felt that they could not hold their ground and continue the battle, they did not fly, shattered and broken, as on the preceding day. Having discharged into our advancing columns a tremendous shower of grape-shot, they limbered up their guns before the smoke had dispersed, and fell back in orderly array. Exhausted

* "The conduct of Tombs's troop yesterday was the admiration of every one; for a long time they were engaged on two sides with the enemy's artillery. Light then got his two eighteen-pounders down to the river-bank and drew off the fire upon himself, and paid it back with interest." — *Harvey Grantham's Letter*. Lieutenant Perkins, of the

Horse Artillery, was killed by a shot from one of the enemy's guns.

† This is stated by Mr. Kotton, who says: "Some were sun-stricken, some slain, and a few, whose cruel thirst induced them to slake it with water provided by the enemy in vessels containing strong corrosive poison, were thus deprived of life."

by the cruel heat and suffering agonies of thirst, the English soldier could not improve his victory by giving chase to the retiring enemy. The mutineers carried off all their guns and stores, and made good their retreat to Delhi. But they had been thus twice beaten in fair fight by inferior numbers, and had nothing but their disgrace to carry back with them and to lay at the feet of their King.

1857.
May 31.

In the English camp there was great rejoicing; and, as the news spread, all men were gladdened by the thought that the tide now seemed to have turned, and that retribution, which, though delayed, was certain, was now overtaking the enemies of our race and the murderers of our people. The old stern courage had been again asserted, and with the old results. Success had returned to our ranks; and there was special cause for congratulation in the fact that Wilson, with a portion only of the old Meerut Brigade, had been the first to inflict punishment on the rebels, and among them upon some of the very men who had prevailed against us so grievously a little time before. But the situation of the little force on the Hindun was not without its perils. It was doubtful whether our troops, exhausted as they were by the work that they had done under that fiery sky, could successfully sustain another attack, if, as was probable, the enemy should come out again from Delhi, and in increased numbers. But the month of June came in, bringing with it no fresh assaults, but a welcome reinforcement. The Goorkah regiment, nearly five hundred strong, having moved down from Bolundshukur, marched into Camp, under its gallant Commandant, Major Charles Reid. At first they were taken for a body of the enemy marching upon our rear. But no sooner were they identified than the

June 1.

1857.

June.

Movements
of Barnard's
force.

British troops turned out and welcomed them with lusty cheers.*

Meanwhile the Delhi Field Force, under Barnard, had marched down to Alipore, which lies at a distance of twelve miles from Delhi. It arrived there on the 5th of June, and was halted until the Meerut troops could come up from the Hindun. There had been some want of understanding between the commanders of the two forces as to the nature of the operations and the point of junction. It had been thought, at one time, that it would be strategically expedient to move upon Delhi from both banks of the Jumna; and after the battles of the Hindun, Wilson's force had halted for orders from the chief. Those orders were received on the 4th of June. That evening Wilson commenced his march, and soon after midnight on the morning of the 6th he crossed the Jumna at Baghput. The delay was a source of bitterness to the Unballah troops, who were furiously eager to fall upon the enemy. Fresh tidings of mutiny and murder had reached them, and the blood of officers and men alike was at fever heat. The impatience, however, was but short-lived. Wilson was now close at hand. And already the waiting was bearing good fruit. On the 6th the Siege-train arrived.

June 6.

Arrival of
Siege-train.

Orders for the equipment of the Train had been received on the 17th of May. On the morning of the 24th, the gates of the Fort were opened. The guns and waggons and the labouring bullocks were all ready. The Sepoys of the Third Regiment at Phil-

* "The whole force turned out and cheered the regiment into Camp; but my poor little fellows were so dead beat they could not return the hearty cheers with which they were welcomed. 'Get something to eat sharp,' said the Brigadier, 'as we

may have to turn out.' Exhausted as my men were, I certainly was not anxious for a fight, and was thankful the mutineers left us alone that day." — *Unpublished Memoir by Major G. Reid.*

1857.
June.

four had volunteered to escort the Train;* and, with some troopers of the Ninth Irregular Cavalry, they now marched upon the Sutlej. The bridge was still passable, and the Train crossed over. Two hours afterwards the boats, which spanned the river, had been swept away by the flooding waters. But, although the Sepoys of the Third Regiment, who had then the game in their hands, had suffered the Train to cross the bridge, it was known that they were mutinous to the core.† So when the whole line of Ordnance was secure on the other bank of the river, it was quietly explained to the Sepoys of the Third that their services were no longer needed. A Contingent of Horse and Foot had been furnished by the Rajah of Nabha, and it was now ready to relieve the men of the suspected regiments. Under this guard of auxiliaries, with which the detachment of Irregular Cavalry moved forward, the Train laboured on to Umballah, which it reached on the 27th of May. But a new difficulty awaited it there; for, although the guns had arrived, they were useless for want of gunners. A weak company was, therefore, despatched from Ferozpour by bullock-train, to be afterwards strengthened by recruits from Meerut. Meanwhile, the position of the train was not without its surrounding dangers. The Nusseree battalion, which had been guilty of such shameful defection in the

* The train consisted of eight eighteen-pounders, four eight-inch howitzers, twelve five-and-a-half-inch mortars, and four eight-inch mortars. (*Norman*). The officer in command of the train was Lieutenant Griffith. Major Kays commanded the whole detachment.

† This is an instance of what has been called the "inexplicable inconsistency" of the Sepoys, who so

often allowed their best opportunities to escape; but Mr. Ricketts sufficiently affords a clue to it when, in his interesting Loodhiana Report, he says that they were pledged in concert with others to a certain course of procedure, and that no temptation of immediate advantage could induce them to diverge from the programme. The later history of this corps will be found in Book VI.

1857.
June.

hour of our need, had come into Umballah, and the Sepoys of the Fifth were striving to induce the Goorkals to combine with them to seize the guns and to march to Delhi.* The plot, however, was frustrated, and the Siege-train passed on safely to Head-Quarters.†

June 7.
Junction with
the Meerut
Force.

On the 7th of June, amidst hearty welcomings and warm congratulations, the Meerut contingent marched gaily into Alipore. At one o'clock on the following morning they commenced the march on Delhi, thirsting for the battle. Their scouts had told them that the enemy were strongly posted in front of the approaches to the city, resolute to contest the progress of the British Force. Never since the first English soldier loaded his piece or unsheathed his sword to smite the dark-faced, white-turbaned Moor or Gentoo—not even when Clive's army, a century before, landed in Bengal to inflict retribution on the perpetrators of the great crime of the Black Hole—had our people moved forward under the impulse of such an eager, burning desire to be amongst the murderers of their race, as on that early June morning, when Barnard's fighting men knew that the mutineers of Meerut and Delhi were within their reach. It had been ascertained that the enemy were strongly posted, Infantry and Cavalry, with thirty guns, about six miles from Delhi, at a place called Budloe-ka-Serai, where groups of old houses and walled gardens, once the country residences of some of the nobles of the Imperial Court, supplied positions capable of powerful resistance.† On this place marched Barnard, on the early morning of the 8th of June, along the

* The Fifth was afterwards dispersed in the presence of two Companies of the Fusiliers.

† On a suggestion from Major Kays

a detachment of Fusiliers was sent to join the escort. The artillery-men from Berozapore joined at Kurnaul.

† Baird Smith.

Grand Trunk Road, with the river on one side and the Western Jumna Canal on the other, whilst Brigadier Hope Grant, with Cavalry and Horse Artillery, crossed the canal and moved down along its right bank with the object of taking the enemy in flank.

1857.
June.

Day was just dawning when Barnard's columns came within fire of the Sepoys' guns. The dispositions which he had made for the attack were excellent, and they were not frustrated by any discovery of a mistaken estimate of the enemy's movements. He found the rebels where he expected to find them. Whilst Showers, with the First Brigade, was to attack upon the right, Graves, with the Second, was to lead his men against the enemy's position on the left; and Grant, on the first sound of the guns, was to re-cross the canal by the bridge in the rear of the rebel-camp, and to take them in flank. The strength of the enemy was known to be in their Artillery. Four heavy guns, Money's Horse Artillery troop, and part of Scott's Battery, were sent in advance to silence their fire, but the guns of the mutineers were of heavier metal than our own, and it was not easy to make an impression on their batteries. For some time the Artillery had the fighting to themselves.* Officers and men were dropping at their guns, and for a little space it seemed doubtful whether they could hold their own. But the British Infantry now deployed into line; and the inspiring mandate to charge the guns went forth to the Seventy-Fifth. Then Herbert led out his noble regiment, with a ringing cheer, right up to the enemy's batteries, and the

June 8.
Battle of
Budlee-ka-
Serai.

* "Light, Kaye, and Pagan, with four heavy guns, bore the brunt for some time, until the brigade of in-

fantry came up and got into line."—*Hersey's Great War Letters*.—Major Kaye was in command.

1857.
June 8.

Second Europeans followed in support. Nothing could resist the impetuous rush of these English soldiers; but the rebels stood well to their guns, and showed that there were some resolute spirits beneath those dusky skins, and that the lessons they had learnt in our camps and cantonments had not been thrown away. Many fought with the courage of desperation, and stood to be bayoneted at their guns. It was not a time for mercy; if it was sought, it was sternly refused.

Meanwhile the Second Brigade, under Graves, charged the enemy's position on the left, and, about the same time, Hope Grant, whose march had been delayed by the state of the roads along which he had advanced, appeared in the enemy's rear with his Cavalry and Horse Artillery. Thus the programme of the preceding day was acted out in all its parts, and the enemy, attacked on every side, had nothing left to them but retreat. At first, they seem to have fallen back in orderly array; but the Lancers, under Yule, fell upon them so fiercely, and the Horse Artillery guns, though impeded by the water-courses, opened so destructive a fire upon them, that they were soon in panic flight, shattered and hopeless. All the guns, and stores, and baggage which they had brought out from the great city were abandoned; and so our first fight before Delhi ended in an assuring victory.

But the day's work was not done. Barnard saw clearly that it was a great thing to make an impression on the enemy, not easily to be effaced, on the first day of the appearance of the Army of Retribution before the walls of Delhi. The sun had risen, and the fury of the June heats was at its height. Our men had marched through the night, they had fought

1857.
June 8.

a battle, they were worn and weary, and now the fierce sun was upon them, and there had been but little time to snatch any sustaining food, or to abate the thirst of the Indian summer; but the strong spirit within them overbore the weakness of the flesh, and there was no demand to be made upon them by their leader to which they were not prepared to respond. Barnard's soldierly experiences had taught him that even a force so broken as the advance of the enemy at Budlee-ka-Serai, might rally, and that they might have a strong reserve. He determined, therefore, to push onward, and not to slacken until he had swept the enemy back into Delhi, and had secured such a position for his force as would be an advantageous base for future operations. From Budlee-ka-Serai the road diverges into two branches, the one a continuation of the Grand Trunk leading to the suburb of Subzee-mundee, and the other leading to the old British Cantonments. Stretching in front of these two positions, and forming, as it were, the base of a triangle, of which the two roads were the sides, was a long rocky ridge overlooking the city. At the point of divergence, Barnard separated his force, and sending Wilson with one division along the former road, led the other himself down to the Ridge. There he found the enemy posted in some strength with heavy guns; but another dexterous flank movement turned their position, and, before they could change their line, the Sixtieth Rifles, the Second Europeans, and Money's Troop were sweeping along the Ridge; and soon Wilson, who had fought his way through the Subzee-mundee, and driven the enemy from their shelter there, appeared at the other end, and the rebels saw that all was lost. There was nothing left for them now but to seek safety behind the walls of

1857
June 8.

the city. From those walls their comrades, looking out towards the scene of action, could see the smoke and flame which pronounced that the Sepoys' Lines, in our old cantonments, were on fire. That day's fighting had deprived them of their shelter outside the walls, and given us the finest possible base for the conduct of our future operations against the city.*

Results of the
Battle.

So the victory of the 8th of June was complete, and it remained for us only to count what we had gained and what we had lost by that morning's fighting. The loss of the enemy is computed at three hundred and fifty men; and they had left in our hands twenty-six guns, with some serviceable ammunition, which we much wanted.† Our own loss was small, considering the dashing character of the work that had been done. Four officers and forty-seven men

* In these first operations, as in all others, as will subsequently appear, the Sirmoor battalion did excellent service. Major Reid thus describes their conduct on the 8th: "About one o'clock P.M. we reached the Ridge, when I was directed by General Barnard to occupy Hindoo Rao's House, which is within twelve hundred yards of the Moree Bastion. Had just made ourselves comfortable, when the alarm was sounded. In ten minutes the mutineers were seen coming up towards Hindoo Rao's house in force. I went out with my own regiment and two companies of Rifles, and drove them back into the city. This, however, was not accomplished till five P.M., so that we were under arms for sixteen hours. Heat fearful. My little fellows behaved splendidly, and were cheered by every European regiment. It was the only Native regiment with the force, and I may say every eye was upon it. The general was anxious to see what the Goorkhas could do, and if we were to be trusted. They had (because it was

a Native regiment) doubts about us; but I think they are now satisfied." It is true, as stated, that the Sirmoor battalion was the only Native regiment engaged on our side; but there were other Native detachments. The Sappers from Meerut fought well, and were commended in Sir H. Barnard's despatch, as was also the Contingent of the Jhelum Rajah. And Jan Fishan Khan, with his horsemen, did gallant service. Flushed with the excitement of the battle, the Afghan chief is said to have declared that another such day would make him a Christian.

† The statement in the text is given on the authority of Sir H. Barnard's official despatch. But the number of guns captured on the 8th of June is set down at *thirteen* in Major Norman's narrative, Major Reid's Extracts from Letters and Notes, and in the "History of the Siege of Delhi by an Officer who served there," &c. Norman has specified in detail the nature of the captured ordnance, and he is notable for his accuracy.

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June 8.

were killed in the encounters of that day, and a hundred and thirty-four men were wounded or missing. Among those who received their death-wounds at Budlee-ka-Serai was the chief of Sir Henry Barnard's Staff. Colonel Chester, Adjutant-General of the Army, was shot down, almost at the commencement of the action. As he lay there, in agony, with young Barnard, the General's son and aide-de-camp, vainly endeavouring to help him, he asked the young officer to raise his head, so that he might see the wound that was rending him; and, having seen it, he knew that he was dying. Telling Barnard that nothing could be done for him, he begged his young friend to leave him to his fate. Then presently the spirit passed away from his body: and, at sunset, all that was left of the Adjutant-General of the Army was laid in the grave. To the Commander of the Delhi Force this must have been a heavy loss, for Chester possessed all the knowledge and experience which Barnard lacked; and the Adjutant-General was a brave soldier and a man of sound judgment, and his advice, in any difficult conjuncture, would have been wisely received with respect.* But Chester had risen in the Department, and the time was coming when departmental experience and traditionary knowledge were to be stripped of their splendid vestments. And History, without any injurious reflection upon his character, may declare that the incident was not all evil that

* "Among the slain was unhappily Colonel Charles Chester, Adjutant-General of the Army, a brave and experienced soldier, whose loss thus early in the campaign was a grave and lamentable misfortune; for his sound judgment and ripe knowledge would have been precious in council as in action."—*Baird Smith's Unpub-*

lished Memoir. Two other officers of the Staff were killed, Captain C. W. Russell and Captain J. W. Delamain. The fourth officer who lost his life was Lieutenant A. Harrison of the Seventy-fifth; Colonel Herbert of that regiment was among the wounded.

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in due course brought Neville Chamberlain and John Nicholson down to Delhi.

But it is not by lists of killed and wounded, or returns of captured ordnance, that the value of the first victory before Delhi is to be estimated. It had given us an admirable base of operations--a commanding military position--open in the rear to the lines along which thenceforth our reinforcements and supplies, and all that we looked for to aid us in the coming struggle, were to be brought. And great as was this gain to us, in a military sense, the moral effect was scarcely less; for behind this ridge lay our old cantonments, from which a month before the English had fled for their lives. On the parade-ground the Head-Quarters of Barnard's Force were now encamped, and the familiar flag of the Feringhees was again to be seen from the houses of the Imperial City.

BOOK V.—PROGRESS OF REBELLION IN UPPER INDIA.

[MAY—JULY, 1857.]

CHAPTER I.

THE NORTH-WEST PROVINCES—STATE OF AFFAIRS AT BENARES—STATE OF THE CITY—THE OUTBREAK AT AZINGURH—ARRIVAL OF GENERAL NEILL—DISARMING OF THE THIRTY-SEVENTH—THE MUTINY AT JAUNPORE—AFFAIRS AT ALLAHABAD—MUTINY OF THE SIXTH—APPEARANCE OF GENERAL NEILL—THE FORT SECURED—RETRIBUTORY MEASURES.

It has been seen that whilst Lord Canning was eagerly exhorting the chiefs of the Army to move with all despatch upon Delhi, never doubting that a crushing blow would soon descend upon the guilty city, he was harassed by painful thoughts of the unprotected state of the country, along the whole great line of the Ganges to Allahabad and thence through the Doab to Agra. There was one English regiment at Dinapore; there was one English regiment at Agra; and besides these the whole strength of our fighting men consisted of a handful of white artillerymen and a few invalided soldiers of the Company's European Army. And, resting upon the broad waters of the Ganges, there was the great military cantonment of Cawnpore, with a large European population, a number of Sepoy regiments, and few, if any, white troops. To all these unprotected places on the banks of the Ganges and the Jumna, and the more inland stations dependent upon

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them, the most anxious thoughts of the Governor-General were now turned, and his most earnest efforts directed. If the Native soldiery, who were thickly strewn along these lines, not only in all the military cantonments, but in all the chief civil stations, guardians alike of the property of our Government and the lives of our people, had risen in that month of May, nothing short of the miraculous interposition of Providence could have saved us from swift destruction.

But in all that defenceless tract of country over which the apprehensions of the Governor-General were then ranging, and towards which he was then eagerly sending up reinforcements, rebellion was for a time in a state of suspension. Whether it was that a day had been fixed for a simultaneous rising of all the Sepoy regiments, or whether, without any such concerted arrangements, they were waiting to see what the English would do to avenge their brethren slaughtered at Meerut and Delhi, the Native soldiery at the stations below those places suffered day after day to pass without striking a blow. No tidings of fresh disaster from the great towns, or from the military cantonments dotting the Gangetic provinces, followed closely upon the news of the capture of the imperial city. But everywhere the excitement was spreading, alike in the Lines and the Bazaars, and it was plain that many weeks would not elapse without a fresh development of trouble, more dreadful, perhaps, than the first growth, of which he already had before him the record.

A little more than four hundred miles from Calcutta, in the direction of the north-west, lies the city

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of Benares. Situated on a steep sloping bank of the Ganges, which its buildings overhang, it is the most picturesque of the river-cities of Hindostan. Its countless temples, now beautiful and now grotesque, with the elaborate devices of sculptors of different ages and different schools; its spacious mosques with their tall minarets grand against the sky;* the richly carved balconies of its houses; its swarming marts and market-places, wealthy with the produce of many countries and the glories of its own looms; its noble ghauts, or flights of landing-stairs leading from the great thoroughfares to the river-brink, and ever crowded with bathers and drawers of the sacred water; the many-shaped vessels moored against the river-banks, and the stately stream flowing on for ever between them, render this great Hindu city, even as seen by the fleshly eye, a spectacle of unsurpassed interest. But the interest deepens painfully in the mind of the Christian traveller, who regards this swarming city, with all its slatternly beauty, as the favoured home of the great Brahminical superstition. It is a city given up to idolatry, with, in the estimation of millions of people, an odour of sanctity about it which draws pilgrims from all parts of India to worship at its shrines or to die at its ghauts. Modern learning might throw doubt upon the traditional antiquity of the place, but could not question the veneration in which it is held as the sacred city of the Hindoos, the cherished residence of the Pundits and the Priests.

But neither sacerdotal nor scholastic influences had softened the manners or tempered the feelings of the

* A recent writer states that it is computed that there are fourteen hundred and fifty-four temples and two hundred and seventy-two

mosques in the city of Benares.—*See Sherring's "Sacred City of the Hindus."*

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people of Benares.* There had always been something more than the average amount of discontent and disaffection among the citizens; and now in the summer of 1857 this was increased by the high price of provisions—always believed to be one of the curses of British rule.† And there was another source of special danger. Some of the most disreputable members of the Delhi Family had been long resident at Benares, where they had assumed all the airs of the Imperial Family, and persistently endeavoured in secret to sow resentment in the city against the English. These wretched Mogul Princes, it was not doubted, would be well disposed, in such a conjuncture, to foment rebellion among the Sepoys; and it was scarcely less probable that the State prisoners—Sikhs, Mahrattas, Mahomedans, and others, who had been made to find an asylum in Benares, would find ample means of gratifying their love of intrigue in dangerous efforts against the power that had brought them to the dust.‡

* The population of Benares is estimated at about two hundred thousand, of which an unusually large proportion are Hindoos. The author of the "Red Pamphlet" computes the number at three hundred thousand, and Macaulay rhetorically amplifies it into "half a million." In May, 1857, Mr. Tucker, the Commissioner, writing to Lord Canning, speaks of "the huge, bigoted city of Benares, with a hundred and eighty thousand of the worst population in the country." This is probably rather under the number, but it is to be remembered that there is in Benares always an immense floating population of pilgrims from other provinces.

† "The city, always the most turbulent in India, was now the more dangerous from the severity with which the high price of corn pressed

upon the poorer classes; the Poor-beah Sepoys, who had been more or less restless since the beginning of March, now publicly called on their Gods to deliver them from the Feringhees, clubbed together to send messengers westward for intelligence, and, finally, sent away their Gooroo (priest), lest, as they said, in the troubles which were coming, he should suffer any hurt."—*Report of Mr. Taylor, Officiating Joint Magistrate.*

‡ Major Charles Macpherson, who had been Governor-General's Agent at Benares, before the appointment was incorporated with the Commissionership, has thus described some of the leading features of the population of Benares: "These attenuated shadows of the regality of Delhi—these strong, noble, robust, and workman-like

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The Secrole
Cantonment.

At a distance of about three miles, inland, from the city of Benares, is the suburb of Secrole. There was the English military cantonment—there were the Courts of Law and the great Jail—the English Church and the English Cemetery—the Government College—the several Missionary Institutes—the Hospitals and Asylums—the Public Gardens, and the private residences of the European officers and their subordinates. The military force consisted of half a company of European Artillery and three Native regiments. These were the Thirty-seventh regiment of Native Infantry, the Sikh regiment of Loodhianah, and the Thirteenth regiment of Irregular Cavalry—in all, some two thousand men, watched by some thirty English gunners. The force was commanded by Brigadier George Ponsonby.* He was an officer of the Native Cavalry, who fifteen years before, in the affair of Purwan-durrah—that charge, which was no charge, and which was at once so heroic and so dastardly—had covered himself with glory. The names of Fraser and Ponsonby, who flung themselves almost alone upon the horsemen of Dost Mahomed, will live as long as that great war is remembered, and will be enshrined in the calendar of our English heroes. In spite of those fifteen years, the incident was still fresh in men's minds in India, and there was confidence in the thought that Ponsonby commanded at Benares.

There other good soldiers also were assembled ;

Sikh chiefs, whom my heart takes in straight ; then the shroffs, merchant-zemindars, and bankers of four hundred years' standing, and insurance companies of Benares—the very essence, pride, and heart of Gangetic commerce, or rather half-heart, Mirzapore holding the other

ventricle ; then, also, its Pandit-dom in full strength yet, all this has passed before me most curiously."—*Memorials of an Indian Officer.*

* In the early part of May, Ponsonby had not taken command. Colonel Gordon then commanded the station.

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The civilians
at Benares.

and civilians too, with the best courage of the soldier and more than his wonted wisdom. Mr. Henry Carr Tucker—one of a family famous alike for courage and for capacity—was Commissioner of Benares. Mr. Frederick Gubbins, who, some time before, as Magistrate, had acquired by a grand display of energy in a local crisis an immense ascendancy over the minds of the people, was now the Judge. Mr. Lind was the Magistrate of Benares. It is impossible to over-rate their exertions.* As soon as the fatal news arrived from Meerut and Delhi, they saw clearly the danger which beset them, and the work which lay before them, to preserve our old supremacy in such a place. The crisis was one which demanded that the civil and military authorities should take counsel together. Warned by the wholesale butcheries of Meerut and Delhi, they deemed it a point of essential urgency that there should be a common understanding as to the place of resort for women and children and non-combatants in the event of a sudden surprise or alarm. A council, therefore, was held; but it would seem that no definite plan of action was formed. On the following day two military officers called upon Mr. Lind, with a proposal that greatly startled him. One was Captain William Olpherts, commanding the Artillery, an officer of good repute, brave as a lion, but of uncertain temper, who had served under Williams of Kara, in the auxiliary operations connected with the Crimean War. The other was Captain Watson, of the En-

* "The magistrate and judge (Messrs. Lind and Gubbins) exerted themselves with great skill to maintain the peace of the city; now patrolling with parties of Sowars, now persuading Bunyahs to lower the price of corn, now listening to

the tales of spies, who reported clearly the state of feeling in the city, and told the minds of the Sepoys far more truly than the officers in command."—*Mr. Taylor's Report.*

gineers. Their opinions were entitled to be received with respect; but when they suggested the propriety of an immediate retreat to the strong fortress of Chunar (eighteen miles distant from Benares), Mr. Lind resented the proposal, and said that nothing would induce him to leave his post. When his visitors had taken their departure, the Magistrate hastened to Mr. Gubbins, and, returning to his own house with the Judge, was presently joined by Mr. Tucker and by Colonel Gordon, who temporarily commanded the station. Olpherts and Watson had intimated that Gordon had approved the plan of retreat to Chunar; but when in answer to a question, which he put to Mr. Gubbins, the civilian said, "I will go on my knees to you not to leave Benares!" Gordon promptly answered, "I am glad to hear you say so. I was persuaded against my will." Mr. Tucker had never doubted that it was their duty to stand fast.* So it was resolved that no sign of anxiety should be made manifest, either to the soldiery or to the people; that every one should remain in his own home, as in quiet times, and that there should be no open display of arming, or any other symptom of distrust. But in the event of a sudden rising either of the soldiery or of the people, all the Christian residents not

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* Mr. Taylor, however, in his official narrative, says, "They both (Lind and Gubbins) returned to Mr. Lind's house to discuss the best means of operation, and were soon joined by Mr. Tucker the Commissioner, and Colonel Gordon. When the former alluded to the plan (the retreat to Chunar) in terms which seemed to imply he approved it, Mr. Lind condemned it most strongly," &c. &c. It is possible that for "former" we should read "latter." In a letter before me (May 19), addressed to Lord Canning, Mr. Tucker

says, "One officer of high rank and much experience recommended that we should make a night march, and shut ourselves up in Chunar. Colonel Gordon, commanding the station, Mr. Gubbins, the Judge, and Mr. Lind, the magistrate, unanimously agreed with me that to show any open distrust in this manner would cause a panic, the bazars would be closed, and both the troops and the city would be up against us. We, therefore, determined to face the danger without moving a muscle."

1857. engaged in suppressing it were to seek refuge in the
May. Mint.

An interval of
quiet.

And so the daily goings on of social life fell back again into the old groove; and some even found, in the prospect before them, causes of increased hopefulness and bountiful anticipations of a pleasure-laden future. Were there not European troops coming up from Dinapore and Calcutta, and would there not be gay doings at Benares? Those whose duty it was to know what was going on in the surrounding country, heard this careless talk with something of a shudder, but wisely refrained from saying anything to dash the cheerfulness of the talkers. "My game," wrote the Commissioner to the Governor-General, "is to keep people in good spirits; so I keep my bad news to myself, and circulate all the good." Meanwhile, he and his colleagues were doing all that could be done, without noise or excitement, to restore confidence alike to the soldiery and to the townspeople. It was no small thing to supply an antidote to the famine-prices which were then ruling in the markets of the city, and this might be done, so far at least as the evil bore upon the soldiery, without interfering with the privileges of the sellers. So the Commissioner guaranteed, on the part of Government, that for every rupee paid by the Sepoys for their *ottah*, a certain number of pounds, as in ordinary times, should be given, whilst the Judge and the Magistrate went about in the city endeavouring (and with good success) to convince the chief importers of grain that it would be sound policy in the end to keep down their prices to the normal rates.* These things had a good effect; but the

* "I guaranteed Pousonby yesterday in issuing *ottah* to the troops at sixteen seers, and trust you will bear me out. It is ill talking to a

hungry man. All the bazaars are open, but very naturally the grain-sellers are apprehensive, and raising their prices. Gubbins and Lind

utter weakness of the European force in Benares, stared these brave and sagacious men in the face at every turn, and they felt that, under Providence, nothing could save them until the arrival of succour, except the calmness and confidence of their demeanour in the hour of danger. "So great is my confidence," wrote the Commissioner, "that I have not a single weapon, beyond a heavy-handled riding-whip, in my possession. In dealing with a parcel of children, which Sepoys and all Natives are, moral force goes a great way." And it should be noted here, as an encouraging symptom, that about this time all the Sikh Sirdars, then prisoners at Benares, offered their services to Mr. Tucker—and it was believed in good faith—to act as a body-guard to him, and to protect his house.

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And the confidence thus felt—which in the breasts of some, at least, was a sustaining trust in the overflowing mercy of God—was made manifest before all the people of Benares, by a practical illustration of a remarkable kind. On the 24th of May, a detachment of forty-four men of the Eighty-fourth Queen's, who had been pushed up by the Governor-General by dawk, arrived from Ghinsurah, near Calcutta. This reinforcement would have more than doubled the reliable military strength on which the security of the English at Benares was to depend. From every station along the great line of country between Delhi and Calcutta had come the despairing

First arrival
of Reinforce-
ments.
May 24.

have been in the city all the morning trying to show the principal importers the good policy of keeping down prices as much as possible."—*Mr. H. C. Tucker to Lord Canning, May 23, 1857.* "Through the exertions of Mr. Gubbins, assisted by Mr. Lind, and his influence with the

wealthy merchants, the price of grain in the Bazaar has fallen from twelve or thirteen seers to fifteen seers (for the rupee). This is a great triumph of confidence, and has reassured the multitude wonderfully."—*The Same to the Same, May 26, 1857.*

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May 24.

cry, "For God's sake send us Europeans!" And now that this help had come to the first of the great undefended stations—small, it is true, in numbers, but still at such a time an immense relief and reinforcement to the little band of Christian men, who were trusting in God, and maintaining a bold front before their fellows—they bethought themselves of others who were in greater need than themselves, and suffered the welcome detachment to pass on to Cawnpore; and that too at a time when they seemed to be in their greatest peril. For news had just come that the Seventeenth Regiment, at Azingurh, some sixty miles distant, was on the verge, if not in the full stream, of open mutiny, and the Benares regiments seemed only to be waiting for a signal from their comrades in the neighbourhood. Still they thought more of others than of themselves. Sir Henry Lawrence had written earnestly to urge upon them the great need of Cawnpore, where General Wheeler was threatened by a dangerous enemy; and so Ponsonby and Tucker, taking counsel together, determined to let the succour which had been sent to them pass on to the relief of others. "Gordon," wrote the Commissioner, "thinks that we have run too great a risk in sending on at once the parties of the Eighty-fourth, whom you sent on to us by dawk; but Sir Henry Lawrence wrote to me so urgently to send every man who could be spared, that Ponsonby and I concurred in thinking that it was our duty to run some risk here, and stretch a point for the relief of Cawnpore. Besides, we argued that nothing could show better to the suspected Thirty-seventh Regiment than that when we had got Europeans from Calcutta, and placed our guns in safety, we did not care to detain, but sent them on straight to join the

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troops collecting above. This is a real mark of confidence in the Sepoys and in ourselves. Besides, it will do good at Allahabad, and along the road, to see Europeans moving up, party after party, so fast. So if anything does happen to Benares before other Europeans join, your lordship must excuse the despatch of these forty-four men as an error of judgment on the right side." Other Europeans had been expected from Dinapore, but scarcely had the men of the Eighty-fourth been pressed forward, when tidings came that the detachment of the Tenth from Dinapore, which had been proceeding upwards to the relief of Benares, had "stuck fast at Chapra." "So all hopes for the present," it was added, "from that quarter are gone." "Brave Brigadier Ponsonby," continued the Commissioner, "calls the failure of the Dinapore relief 'a slight contretemps, somewhat unpleasant, but it cannot be helped.' I am glad we did not know of it yesterday evening, as it might have prevented the despatch of the forty-four men to Cawnpore." But, next day, when further reinforcements arrived, they were all hurried onward to Cawnpore. "I had another telegram this morning," wrote Mr. Tucker to Lord Canning on the 27th, "from Sir Henry Lawrence, begging me to spare no expense in hurrying up European aid. We send up all the men we get from Calcutta. Thirty-eight more will go this evening. We do not keep one for ourselves." Even the detachment of the Tenth from Dinapore was to be sent on "the moment it arrives." "Your lordship may feel assured," added the Commissioner, "that nothing will be left undone to insure the quickest possible relief to Cawnpore. I have let Sir H. Wheeler know what we are doing to relieve him, as Hope is half the battle."

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May.

Diversities of
English man-
hood.

Thus, already, was the great national courage of the English beginning to take many shapes. Whilst some, girding up their loins, were eager to anticipate danger and to strike at once, smiting everywhere, hip and thigh, like the grand remorseless heroes of the Old Testament; others were fain to oppose to the mass of rebellion that was surging upwards to the surface, the calm impassive fortitude of patient resolution, born of an abiding faith in God. Men of different temperaments and different convictions then wrought or waited according to the faith that was in them, with self-devotion beyond all praise. There was need of strenuous action in those days; but there was need also of that calm confidence which betrays no sign of misgiving, and the very quietude of which indicates a consciousness of strength. Restricted sympathy and narrow toleration are among the manifestations of our national character, not less than the broad many-sided courage of which I have spoken; and therefore it has happened that sometimes rash judgments have been passed by men incapable of understanding other evidences of bravery than those which their own would put forth in similar crises.* But it may be easier to go out to battle with death than quietly to await its coming. The energy that stimulates the one is less rare than the patience that inspires the other. But this quiet courage must be content to wait for quiet times to be estimated at its true worth.†

* Charles Dickens, in a notice of the Life of Walter Savage Landor, which I have read since the passage in the text was written, says that Landor's "animosities were chiefly referable to his singular inability to discolate other people's ways of thinking from his own." But I am

inclined to think that this inability, so far from being singular, is the commonest thing in the world.

† How utterly free the Commissioner was from the least leaven of official intolerance, and how eager he was to be wrong, and to get justice done to all wrongs, may be seen

1857.

May.

Henry Carrs
Tucker.

Henry Tucker was a Christian gentleman, in whom the high courage of our race took this latter form. He went about, fearless and confident, saying to himself, "The Lord is my rock, my fortress, and my deliverer; the God of my rock, in Him will I trust. He is my shield and the horn of my salvation; my high tower, and my refuge; my Saviour."* And in this abundant, overflowing confidence and resignation he seemed to despise all human means of defence, and almost to regard defensive efforts—"secondary means"—as a betrayal of want of faith in the Almighty. "Rather against Ponsonby's and my wish," he wrote to the Governor-General, "but by the advice of Messrs. Gubbins and Lind, and at the entreaty of the European residents, arms and ammunition have, this day, been issued out to all who required them. I hope that it will make their minds easy, and that they will rest quiet. I am so thankful we have no place of defence here. We have nowhere to run to, so must stand firm—and hitherto there has not been one particle of panic and confusion." And he said that if the enemy came he would go out to meet them with a bible in his hand, as David had gone out to meet Goliath with a pebble and a sling. He rode out in the most exposed places, evening after evening, with his daughter, as in quiet times; and when some one suggested to him that the

in the following extracts from letters written by him to Lord Canning: "Mr. F. Gubbins is a very superior man, and will make a model commissioner. I feel very thankful to have such a coadjutor here to make up for my own great deficiencies." And in another letter the Commissioner says: "Mr. Gubbins is carrying on the work in the most most energetically. Under the blessing of Providence we have been the

means of securing great peace and quiet in the city and neighbourhood." And again: "I hope your lordship will find time for a letter of hearty thanks to Mr. F. Gubbins for his beautiful police arrangements and general exertions, in which Mr. Lind has aided greatly."

* He wrote to Lord Canning that the 32nd chapter of Samuel II. (which contains these words) had been "their stand-by."

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hat which he wore, being of a peculiar character, would clearly indicate the Commissioner, and afford a mark for a rebel shot, he said that he was as safe in one head-dress as in another, and had no thought of a change.

Language and action of this kind might be regarded as mere imbecility. It is not strange, indeed, that a man of Mr. Tucker's character was described as an amiable enthusiast quite unequal to the occasion; for his courage was not of the popular type, and his character not intelligible to the multitude. But, even looked upon in the light of mere human wisdom, the course which was favoured by the Benares Commissioner had much, at that time, to recommend it. For as the absolute weakness of the European community, with only thirty effective soldiers to defend them, forbade any successful resort to arms, it was sound policy thus to preserve a quietude of demeanour, significant of confidence—confidence both in our own security and in the loyalty of those who surrounded and who might have crushed us in an hour.* In continual communication, not only with Lord Canning at Calcutta, but with the chiefs of all the great stations, as Dinapore, Cawnpore, Lucknow, and Agra, Henry Tucker knew what was being done in some quarters, and what was needed in others, to meet the difficulties of the crisis. He knew that help was coming from below; and that if rebellion were smouldering either in the Lines or in the City, the longer it could be left to smoulder,

* I do not wish it to be inferred from this that I think the serving out of arms and ammunition to the European Residents was a mistake; but I can appreciate Mr. Tucker's motives, and understand his reasons for inscribing "Thorough" on his

policy of inaction. It will be seen presently that Lord Canning, though he admired the calm confidence of Mr. Tucker, sided with Mr. Gubbins in this matter, and I do not doubt that he was right.

before bursting into a blaze, the better. The confiding policy was the temporising policy. Those who best knew the character of the Bengal Sepoy, knew that a vague fear, more impressive for its very vagueness, was driving thousands into rebellion; and that the best way to keep things quiet was to do nothing to excite or to alarm. And so the month of May wore on, and European reinforcements came from below; but, in spite of the great temptation to retain them, Tucker and Ponsonby had strength to send them onward to succour others. They knew that they were exposing themselves to the reproaches of their comrades; but they felt that they could bear even this. "You and I," wrote Ponsonby to the Commissioner, "can bear much in such a cause. To aid the distressed is not so very wicked."

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The high bearing of the chief officers at Benares excited the admiration of the Governor-General. And in the midst of all his urgent duties—his pressing cares and anxieties—Lord Canning found, or made, time, to write letters of stirring encouragement to all, of whose good deeds he had ample assurance. Whether the well-doer were a General Officer, a Civil or Political Commissioner, or a young regimental subaltern, Lord Canning wrote to him, with his own hand, a letter of cordial thanks, full of frank kindness, which braced up the recipient to new exertions and made him ever love the writer. He knew the effect at such a time of prompt recognition of good service, and he felt that such recognition, under the hand of secretaries, public or private, would lose half its influence for good. He had a wonderful grace of letter-writing; and there are

Encourage-
ment from
Lord Can-
ning.

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many now who treasure up, as their most cherished possessions, the few expressive lines, warm from the heart, in which, amidst dangers and difficulties that might well have excused graver omissions, the Governor-General poured forth his gratitude to his subordinates for good aid of any kind—for wise counsel, for fertility of resource, for active heroism, or for patient courage.

Thus, on the 23rd of May, he wrote to Mr. Tucker: "Although it represents a most critical state of things at Benares, it satisfies me that the crisis is met with calm courage, based upon that which alone is the foundation of true courage, and that events as they arise will be dealt with temperately, firmly, and with sound judgment. You have, indeed, a precious stake upon the issue. I sympathise deeply with your family. If they need to be assured of it, I beg you to tell them that not an hour has been, or will be, lost in sending aid to Benares, and wherever else it may be most urgently required. . . . Come what may, do not fear any aspersions or misrepresentations. No one shall be ignorant how nobly the authority of our Government, and the honour and dignity of Englishmen, has been upheld at Benares."

May 30.

And to Mr. Gubbins he wrote, a week afterwards, saying: "If I had more leisure for writing letters, I should not have left you so long without a word of thanks for your admirable and most judicious exertions. I know from Mr. Tucker's letters and messages, and also from other quarters, how much is due to you and to Mr. Lind, and I beg you both to believe that I am most grateful for it. You have all had a difficult game to play—if ever there was one; and your success has been hitherto complete. I pray that you may carry it through. You have done

really good service in the Bazaars, in obtaining a reduction of the price of grain." And he then added, with reference to the difference of opinion which had prevailed respecting the arming of the Europeans, "I think you quite right in recommending that arms should not be refused to the Europeans, who desired them. Your self-confidence has been made quite plain by the calm front you have already shown to all danger; and I do not believe that any of the advantages thereby gained will be sacrificed by the adoption of a common-sense precaution, which does not necessarily imply mistrust of those more immediately around you, when, as is too surely the case, there is abundance of danger at a little distance."*

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May 30.

But although outwardly there was fair promise of continued tranquillity, as the month of May came to a close a crisis was, indeed, approaching. The birth of June was ushered in by the familiar work of the incendiary. A line of Sepoys' huts recently vacated was fired; and it was found that the wretched scum of Delhi royalty were in close communication with the Incendiaries. Then news came that the Sepoy Regiment at Azimgurh, sixty miles off, had revolted. This was the Seventeenth Regiment, under the command of Major Burroughs. It had been believed all along to be tainted, for it had been brigaded with the Nineteenth and Thirty-fourth, which had been ignominiously disbanded, and it was known that some of the men of the former were harboured in its Lines. Its insolence had been manifested unchecked, for Burroughs was not equal to the occasion; and although the Magistrate, Horne, had himself addressed

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Azimgurh.

* M.S. Correspondence of Lord Canning.

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the Sepoys, and otherwise striven to keep them true to their salt, the evil influences had prevailed, so that before the end of the month the men of the Seventeenth were ripe for revolt.* It happened that just at this critical moment they scented the spoil. The rattle of the rupees was heard in the distance. A treasure-escort was coming in from Goruckpore, under charge of a Company of the Seventeenth Sepoys and some Horsemen of the Thirteenth Irregular Cavalry, and this was to have been despatched, with the surplus treasure of Azimgurh, to Benares, under command of Lieutenant Palliser, who had been sent from the latter place with a detachment of the Thirteenth to escort it. Five lakhs of rupees had come from Goruckpore, and two lakhs were added to it at Azimgurh; seventy thousand pounds in the hard bright coin of the country, and this was now in the grasp of the Sepoys. The temptation was more than they could resist. So they rose and loudly declared that the treasure should not leave the station. This stern resolution, however, seems to have been lulled for a time, and on the evening of the 3rd of June, the treasure-escort marched out from Azimgurh. It was felt, however, that the danger had not been escaped, and that at any moment the Sepoys might break into open rebellion. The officers and their wives were dining at the Mess of the Seventeenth, when all their anxieties were confirmed by the well-known warning voice of the guns. It was plain that the firing was in the direction of the Parade-ground. A beating of drums was soon heard; and no words were needed to express the assurance of

* On May 24, when some men afterwards violently assaulted a Native officer, Major Burroughs found himself too weak to punish, immediately rejected extra cartridges which were sent out to them and

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all that the Sepoys had risen.* There was then a scene of confusion, which it is not easy accurately to describe. The ladies and non-combatants hurried off to the Cutcherry, which had been fortified by the Magistrate and his colleagues, and there barricaded themselves. Meanwhile the Sepoys, having shot their Quartermaster and their Quartermaster-Sergeant,† but, with the strange inconsistency of conduct which distinguished all their movements, having spared and, indeed, protected the rest of their officers, hurried after the treasure-escort to seize the coin on the road to Benares. And with them went the myrmidons of the Police-force, which Horne had made vast efforts to strengthen for the protection of the jail, but which had displayed its zeal in the hour of our trouble by releasing the prisoners, and giving up the houses of the English to plunder and conflagration.

When they swarmed down upon him, all armed and accoutred and eager for the spoil, Palliser found that he was helpless. The troopers of the Thirteenth Irregulars were wavering. They were not so far gone in rebellion as to desire the death of their officers, but a strong national sympathy restrained them from acting against their countrymen. The officers, therefore, were saved. But the treasure was lost. The Sepoys of the Seventeenth‡ carried it back

* There were two post guns stationed at Azimgurh. These the mutineers seized at the commencement of this outbreak. They were afterwards taken into Oude.

† Lieutenant Hutchinson and Quartermaster-Sergeant Lewis.

‡ It is stated on the authority of Lieutenant Constable of the Seventeenth, that the Sepoys "behaved with romantic courtesy." "They formed a square round their officers, and said that they not only would

not touch, but would protect them, only that there were some of the mutineers who had sworn the death of particular officers, and therefore they begged the whole party to take to their carriages and be off at once. "But how are we to get our carriages?" said they, "seeing that they are scattered all through the station." "Ah, we will fetch them," said the Sepoys; and so they did, and gave the party an escort for ten miles out of the station on the

1857. to Azimgurh, whilst the Irregulars escorted their
June. officers on to Benares. Meanwhile, the European Residents of the former place had fled to Ghazeepore; and when the Sepoys returned to their old station, they found all European authority gone, and the official functionaries, civil and military, swept out of it to a man. So, flushed with success, they marched off to Fyzabad in military array, with all the pomp and panoply of war.

The crisis at
Benares.

June 4, 1857.

When news of these events reached Benares, crusted over in the first instance with some exaggerations, it was plain that the hour was approaching when tranquillity could no longer be maintained. But the vigorous activity of Gubbins and the calm composure of Tucker, holding rebellion in restraint whilst succours were far-off, had already saved Benares; for now fresh reinforcements were at hand, and with them one who knew well how to turn them to account. After despatching his men, as has been already told,* by the railway to Raneegunge, Colonel Neill had made his way, by train and horse-dawk to Benares with the utmost possible despatch, eager to avenge the blood of his slaughtered countrymen. And with this Madras Colonel came the first assertion of English manhood that had come from the South to the rescue of our people in the Gangetic provinces. Leading the way to future conquests, he came to strike and to destroy. He was one of those who wisely thought

Arrival of
Neill.

road to Ghazeepore. It has been remarked that to complete the romance they ought to have offered the officers a month's pay out of the treasure they were plundering."—*Annals of the Indian Rebellion, Part IV.* This is somewhat inconsistent with the statement (*Red Pankaj*)

that the Sepoys of the Seventeenth implored the Irregulars to slay their officers, "appealing to religion, nationality, love of money, even offering 5000% for each head." These inconsistencies, however, were fast becoming common phenomena.

* *Ante*, p. 132.

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from the first, that to strike promptly and to strike vigorously would be to strike mercifully; and he went to the work before him with a stern resolution not to spare. Both from the North and from the South, at this time, the first great waves of the tide of conquest were beginning to set in towards the centres of the threatened provinces. From one end of the line of danger, Canning, and from the other, Lawrence, was sending forth his succours—neither under-estimating the magnitude of the peril, but both confident of the final result. It was the work of the latter, as will be told hereafter, to rescue Delhi, whilst the former was straining every effort to secure the safety of Benares, Allahabad, Agra, Cawnpore, Lucknow, and other lesser places dependent upon them. And now assistance had really come to the first of these places. A detachment of Madras Fusiliers was at Benares, and the men of the Tenth Foot, from Dinapore, whose arrival had been delayed by an accident, had also made their appearance. It was determined, therefore, that the Sepoys should be disarmed.

But a question then arose as to the hour of disarming. The first idea was, that the regiment should be paraded on the following morning, and that then the several companies, after an assuring explanation, should be called upon to lay down their arms. But there were those in Benares, to whom the thought of even an hour's delay was an offence and an abomination. When work of this kind is to be done, it should be done, they thought, promptly. Stimulated by the intelligence from Azimgurh, and suspecting what was in store for them, the Sepoys might rise before morning, and then all our councils and cautions would be vain. The chief command was in

The question
of disarming.

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Ponsonby's hands, and it was for him to give the word for disarming. It appears that Colonel Gordon, who had ascertained that the more turbulent spirits of the city were in communication with the Sepoys, accompanied the Brigadier to the house of the Commissioner to consult with him. Tucker suggested that they should call on Gubbins; so they went to the Judge's residence, and there they received ample confirmation of the reports which Gordon had heard. Soon afterwards they met Colonel Neill, who was eager for immediate action;* and, after some dis-

* The circumstances conducing to this change of plan have been variously stated. Mr. Taylor, in his official report already quoted, says: "It appears that as Brigadier Ponsonby was returning home after the Council, he met Colonel Neill, who recommended him to disarm the corps at once. Disregarding all other consideration, he hurried to the parade ground." But in a letter before me, written by Brigadier Ponsonby in July, that officer states that, "On the 4th of June Lieutenant-Colonel Gordon, commanding the Regiment of Loodhiana, called and informed me that he had reason to believe the men of the Thirty-seventh Native Infantry were entering into a conspiracy with some of the bad characters of the City, in view to the subversion of the British power in Benares. After some conversation on the subject, in which I ascertained from the Lieutenant-Colonel that he considered that he could rely on the fidelity of his own regiment, we agreed to go together to the Commissioner, Mr. Tucker, and to acquaint him with what had been communicated. We proceeded to Mr. Tucker, and on broaching the subject of our visit, he proposed that we should go to Mr. F. Gubbins, who lived close at hand, and we did so. Mr. Gubbins, it appeared, had heard from his spies that which not

only confirmed Colonel Gordon's report, but gave much more detailed information as to the secret proceedings of the men of the Thirty-seventh Native Infantry. Colonel Neill came in while Mr. Gubbins was speaking, and soon afterwards the Brigademajor, Captain Dodgson, entered to report that the treasure, which was on its way from Azimgurh to Benares under a guard of fifty men of the Irregular Cavalry, had been plundered by the Seventeenth Native Infantry—the guard of the Irregulars having connived at the deed. It was immediately felt that this circumstance, occurring in such close proximity to Benares, rendered the adoption at once of some strong measures imperative, and Lieutenant-colonel Gordon proposed the disarming of the Thirty-seventh Native Infantry, to which I acceded. There was some discussion as to whether this should be attempted at once, or at ten A.M. on the following day. Mr. Gubbins having expressed his opinion that emissaries from the Seventeenth Native Infantry would soon be in Benares, it was settled to disarm the Thirty-seventh at five o'clock, and it being now past four, it was also arranged to keep the measure as quiet as possible in order that the regiment might not be on its guard." Nothing can be more distinct than this. But Colonel

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cussion, the Brigadier consented to hold a parade at five o'clock, and at once to proceed to the work of disarmament.

Then Ponsonby and Gordon went together to the house of the latter, where they found or were joined by Major Barrett of the Thirty-seventh. The Sepoy officer, after the manner of his kind, with that fond and affectionate confidence in his men, which was luring so many to destruction, solemnly protested against the measure, as one which would break their hearts. To this Ponsonby replied, that what he had learnt from Mr. Gubbins had left him no alternative, and that, therefore, it was Barrett's duty to warn the officers to be ready for the five o'clock parade. The Brigadier had ordered his horse to be brought to Gordon's house, and now the two mounted and rode to the parade-ground, to plan the best disposition of the troops. The horse which Ponsonby rode had not been ridden for a month. It was fresh and restive,

Neill, with equal distinctness, declares that Ponsonby and Gordon called upon him, and that he (Neill) recommended the afternoon parade. In his official despatch he says: "Brigadier Ponsonby consulted with me about taking the muskets from the Thirty-seventh, leaving them their side-arms. He proposed waiting until the following morning to do this. I urged its being done at once, to which he agreed, and *left my quarters* to make his arrangements." In his private journal, too, he records that, "The Brigadier *called on me* at three p.m., with Colonel Gordon of the Sikhs, informing me of the mutiny of the Seventeenth at Azimgurh . . . very undecided . . . would put off everything until to-morrow. I speak out, and urge him to act at once, which he unwillingly agrees to . . . the Europeans to parade at five p.m. . . . the Thirty-

seventh to be disarmed . . . the Irregulars and Sikhs said to be staunch to act with us." We have, therefore, before us three conflicting statements. Mr. Taylor says that Ponsonby met Neill as the former was going home from Gubbins's house. Ponsonby says that Neill came into Gubbins's house, when he (the Brigadier) and Gordon were there. And Neill says that the Brigadier and Gordon visited him in his own quarters. The matter is of little importance in itself; but the discrepancies cited afford an apt illustration of the difficulties which beset the path of a conscientious historian. On the whole, I am disposed to think that Neill, writing on the day of the events described, is more likely to be correct than Ponsonby, writing a month afterwards, or Taylor, collecting facts, after the lapse of more than a year.

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and the motion of the animal, aided by the slant rays of the afternoon sun, soon began to affect him. Enfeebled as he was by previous illness, he became, in his own words, "most anxious and uneasy in mind and body." But, whilst Gordon was drawing up the Sikh Regiment, he rode to the European Barracks, where he found Neill mustering the Europeans, and Olpherts getting ready his guns. The necessary orders were given; but the Brigadier felt that he was no longer equal to the responsibility of the work that lay before him.

And, in truth, it was difficult and dangerous work that then lay before the English commanders. The Native force was some two thousand strong. The Europeans hardly mustered two hundred and fifty.* Of the temper of the Sepoy Regiment there was no doubt. The Irregulars had been tried on the road from Azimgurh, where they had betrayed the weakness of their fidelity, if they had not manifested the strength of their discontent.† But the Sikh Regiment was believed to be faithful; and, if it were faithful, there could be no doubt of the result of that afternoon's parade. It is said that, as they were assembling for parade, they were in high spirits, and appeared to be eager to be led against the Hindostanees of the Regular Army. Not merely in Benares,

* The official returns state—H.M.'s Tenth Regiment, one hundred and fifty men and three officers; Madras Fusiliers, sixty men and three officers; Artillery, thirty men and two officers.

† These regiments of Irregular Cavalry were differently constituted from those of the Regular Sepoy Army. They had few European officers, and those only picked men, who had the greatest pride in their several corps, and seldom or never

any desire to leave them. The troopers, who received high pay and found their own horses, were generally men of a better class, and the position of the Native officers was of a higher and more responsible character than in the regular Army. All these things were at first supposed to be favourable to the continuance of the fidelity of the Irregular Cavalry. But it was soon found that they were as incurably tainted as the rest,

but in all parts of the country, was it of the highest moment that the Sikh fighting men should be on our side; for it was believed that the fame of their loyalty would spread, on all sides, to the confines of our Empire, and that, throughout the Punjab itself, the renown of their achievements would stimulate others to do likewise. But everywhere so great a sensitiveness thrilled through the Native troops of all nationalities, that it was always possible that the weight of a feather in the balance might determine the out-turn of events on the side of loyalty or rebellion.

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When the order for disarming had gone forth, Colonel Spottiswoode and his officers proceeded to the parade-ground of the Thirty-seventh, turned out the regiment, and ordered them to lodge their muskets in the bells-of-arms. There were about four hundred men on parade, the remainder, with the exception of one company at Chunar, being on detached duty in the station. To Spottiswoode it appeared that the men were generally well-disposed. There were no immediate signs of resistance. First the grenadier company, and then the other companies up to No. 6, quietly lodged their arms in obedience to the word of command. At this point a murmur arose, and some of the men were heard to say that they were betrayed—that the Europeans were coming to shoot them down when they were disarmed. Hearing this, Spottiswoode cried out that it was false, and appealed to the Native officers, who replied that he had always been a father to them. But a panic was now upon them, for they saw the white troops advancing. By word of command from Ponsonby the Europeans and the guns were moving forward towards the Sepoys' lines. Opposite to the quarter-guard of the Thirty-seventh

The Disarming Parade.

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the Brigadier ordered the little force under Colonel Neill to be wheeled into line and halted. He then went forward and spoke to the Sepoys of the guard. He said that they were required to give up their arms, and that if they obeyed as good soldiers, no harm of any kind would befall them. As he spoke he laid his hand assuringly on the shoulder of one of the Sepoys, who said that they had committed no fault. To this Ponsonby replied in Hindostanee: "None; but it is necessary that you should do as you are ordered, as so many of your brethren have broken their oaths and murdered their officers, who never injured them." Whilst he was still speaking, some of the men shouted to their comrades on the right and left; a stray shot or two was fired from the second company, and presently the Sepoys rushed in a body to the bells-of-arms, seized their muskets, loaded and fired upon both their own officers and the Europeans. Going about the work before them in a systematic, professional manner, they sent some picked men and good marksmen to the front as skirmishers, who, kneeling down, whilst others handed loaded muskets to them, fired deliberately upon the Europeans from a distance of eighty or a hundred yards. Seven or eight men of the Tenth were shot down, and then the rest fell back in line with the rear of the guns. Meanwhile the officers of the Thirty-seventh, who had been providentially delivered from the fire of their men, were seeking safety with the guns; but Major Barrett, who had always protested against the disarming of the regiment, and now believed that it was foully used, cast in his lot with it, and would not move, until a party of Sepoys carried him off to a place of safety. To the fire of the Sepoy musketeers the British Infantry now responded, and the guns were wheeled

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round to open upon the mutineers with irresistible grape. The English gunners were ready for immediate action. Anticipating resistance, Olpherts had ordered his men, when they moved from their lines, to carry their cartridges and grape-shot in their hands.* The word of command given, the guns were served with almost magical rapidity; and the Thirty-seventh were in panic flight, with their faces turned towards the Lines. But from behind the cover of their huts they maintained a smart fire upon the Europeans; so Olpherts, loading his nine-pounders both with grape and round shot, sent more messengers of death after them, and drove them out of their sheltering homes. Throwing their arms and accoutrements behind them, and many of them huddling away clear out of cantonments beyond the reach of the avenging guns, they made their way to the city, or dispersed themselves about the country, ready for future mischief and revenge.

Meanwhile, the detachment of Irregular Cavalry and Gordon's Sikhs had come on to parade. It was soon obvious what was the temper of the former. Their commander, Captain Guise,† had been killed by a Sepoy of the Thirty-seventh, and Dodgson, the Brigade-Major, was ordered to take his place. He had scarce taken command, when he was fired at by a trooper. Another attempted to cut him down. But the Sikhs appear to have had no foregone intention of turning against our people. Whether the object of the Parade and the intentions of the British officers were ever sufficiently explained to them is not very

* Whether this was observed by the Sepoys I know not; but if it were, there can be no difficulty in accounting for their suspicion and alarm.

† One writer says that Guise's head was afterwards split open by his own troopers. He was shot on the rear of the Lines, as he was going to parade.

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apparent; but they seem to have been, in this juncture, doubtful and suspicious, and it needed but a spark to excite them into a blaze. The outburst of the Irregulars first caused them to waver. They did not know what it all portended; they could not discern friends from foes. At this critical moment, one of the Sikhs fired upon Colonel Gordon, whilst another of his men moved forward to his protection. In an instant the issue was determined. Olpherts was limbering up his guns, when Crump, of the Madras Artillery, who had joined him on parade and was acting as his subaltern, cried out that the Sikh regiment had mutinied. At once the word was given to unlimber, and at the same moment there was a cry that the Sikhs were about to charge. At this time they were shouting and yelling frantically, and firing in all directions—their bullets passing over and through the English battery. They were only eighty or a hundred yards from us on an open parade-ground; and at that time our Artillery were unsupported by the British Infantry, who had followed the mutineers of the Thirty-seventh Regiment into their Lines. It was not a moment for hesitation. The sudden rush of a furious multitude upon our guns, had we been unprepared for them, might have overwhelmed that half-battery with its thirty English gunners; and Benares might have been lost to us. So Olpherts, having ascertained that the officers of the Sikh corps had taken refuge in his rear, brought round his guns and poured a shower of grape into the regiment. Upon this they made a rush upon the guns—a second and a third—but were driven back by the deadly showers from our field-pieces, and were soon in confused flight. And with them went the mutineers of the Irregular Cavalry; so the work was thoroughly

done, and Olpherts remained in possession of the field. 1857.
June 4.

Whilst these events were developing themselves on the parade-ground, the little power of endurance still left in the Brigadier was rapidly failing him, and before the afternoon's work was done he was incapable of further exertion. The slant rays of the declining sun, more trying than its meridian height, dazzled and sickened the old soldier. The pain and discomfort which he endured were so great that he was unable any longer to sit his horse. Having previously given orders to Colonel Spottiswoode to fire the Sepoys' lines that none might find shelter in them, he made over the command to Colonel Neill, who eagerly took all further military responsibility on himself.* The victory of the Few over the Many was soon completed. Some who had sought shelter in the Lines were driven out and destroyed, whilst a few who succeeded in hiding themselves were burnt to death in their huts.†

* It is not easy to determine the exact period at which Ponsonby gave over the command to Neill. From the official report of the latter it would appear to have been done before the Sikhs broke into mutiny, but Ponsonby's own statement would fix the time at a later period. The account in the text is the official version of the transfer of command; but the fact, I believe is, that Neill, seeing Ponsonby on the ground, went up to him and said, "General, I assume command." So Neill's journal, and oral information of an officer who heard him say it.

† There is no passage in this history on which more care and labour have been expended than on the above narrative of the disarming at Benares on the 4th of June. In compiling it I have had before me several detailed statements made by

officers present at the parade, including a full narrative written by Brigadier Ponsonby, and furnished to me by his widow, and the private journals and letters of Colonel Neill, as well as his official reports. Colonel Spottiswoode's statement is published in the Parliamentary Return relating to the Regiments that have mutinied. There was also a very clearly written narrative by Ensign Tweedie (one of the young officers wounded by the fire of the Sikh regiment), printed in the newspapers of the day. Besides these, I have had the advantage of much personal conversation with one of the chief surviving actors in the scene described, and have received from him written answers to my questions on all doubtful points. I have a strong conviction, therefore, that the story cannot be more correctly told.

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June 4.

The military
question con-
sidered.

All the circumstances of this parade of the 4th of June being fairly reviewed and impartially considered, it is not strange that some should think that it was grievously mismanaged. That this was the opinion of the highest authorities at the time is certain. Writing on the 6th of June to the Governor-General, the Benares Commissioner said, "I fear the business of disarming was very badly managed indeed. The Sepoys feel very sore at what they consider an attack on men, many of whom were unarmed at the time. This is not a point for a civilian to discuss, but the general opinion seems to be that the affair was much mismanaged." This opinion was shared by Lord Canning, who wrote, a fortnight afterwards to the President of the India Board, that the disarming "was done hurriedly and not judiciously." "A portion of a regiment of Sikhs," he added, "was drawn into resistance, who, had they been properly dealt with, would, I fully believe, have remained faithful." And, sixteen months afterwards, the civil functionary, on whom it devolved to write an official account of these transactions, deliberately recorded his belief, it may be assumed after full investigation, that the Sikhs were brought out not knowing what was to be done; that the whole affair was a surprise; that, as a corps, they were loyal, and "would have stood any test less rude."

The inference to be drawn from this is not so much that the business was done badly as that it was done hastily; or rather that it was done badly because it was done hastily. The sudden resolution to disarm the Thirty-seventh on that Thursday afternoon left no time for explanations. If the whole of the black troops at Benares had been known to be steeped in

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sedition to the lips, and ready for an immediate outbreak, it would have been sound policy to surprise them, for only by such a course could our little handful of white soldiers hope to overthrow the multitude of the enemy. But whilst the regular Sepoys were only suspected, in whole or in part, of treacherous designs, and the intentions of the Irregulars were still doubtful, there had been nothing in the conduct of the Sikh regiment to cast a doubt upon its fidelity. It was an occasion, indeed, on which kindly explanations and assurances might have had the best effect. But there was no time for this. When it was tried with the Thirty-seventh, both by the Brigadier and by the Colonel, it was too late; for the Europeans were advancing, and the panic had commenced. And with the Sikhs it seems not to have been tried at all. It would, however, be scarcely just to cast the burden of blame on any individual officer. What was evil was the suddenness of the resolution to disarm and the haste of its execution. But this is said to have been a necessary evil. And whilst we know the worst that actually happened, we do not know the something worse that might have resulted from the postponement of the disarming parade. Even at the best, it is contended, if the Thirty-seventh had been quietly disarmed, it would have been sore embarrassment to us to watch all those disarmed Sepoys. It would, indeed, to a great extent have shut up our little European force, and, thus crippling its powers of action, have greatly diminished our strength. Moreover, it is contended that, in the crisis that had arisen, this stern example, these bloody instructions, had great effect throughout that part of the Gangetic Provinces, and, indeed, through-

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out the whole of the country. It was made manifest that European military power was neither dead nor paralysed. There was a beginning of retribution. The white troops were coming up from beyond the seas. Though few in numbers at first, there were thousands behind them, and Upper India would soon be covered by our battalions. The moral effect of this, it was said, would be prodigious. The mailed hand of the English conqueror was coming down again crushingly upon the black races.

And even as regards the Sikh corps, it was said that a large proportion of the Regiment—the Regiment from Loodhianah—were not Sikhs, but Hindostances; that they were the brethren of the regular Sepoys, and that they had come on to Parade with their pieces loaded. This last fact is not conclusive against them. It may have been the result wholly of uncertainty and suspicion. But Olpherts, when he fired upon them, was fully assured that they had broken into open mutiny, and nothing ever afterwards tended to weaken his original conviction. That there was mutiny in the Regiment—and mutiny of the worst kind—however limited it may have been, is certain; and if this were the first, it was far from being the last instance of a whole regiment being irrevocably compromised by the misconduct of a few Sepoys. An officer, with his guns loaded, in the presence of an overwhelming number of Native soldiers, cannot draw nice distinctions or disentangle the knot of conflicting probabilities. He must act at once. The safety of a station, perhaps of an Empire, may depend upon the prompt discharge of a shower of grape. And the nation in such an emergency will less readily forgive him for doing too little than for doing too much.

Complete as was the military success, the danger was not passed. The dispersion of a multitude of mutinous Sepoys might have been small gain to us in the presence of a rebellious population. If the malcontents of the city had risen at this time and made common cause with the dispersed soldiery and with their comrades under arms at the different guards, they might have overwhelmed our little gathering of Christian people. But the bountiful Providence, in which Commissioner Tucker had trusted, and which seemed to favour the brave efforts of Judge Gubbins, raised up for us friends in this awful crisis, and the fury of the many was mercifully restrained. It had been arranged that in the event of an outburst, all the Christian non-combatants should betake themselves to the Mint, which lay between the cantonment and the city, as the building best suited to defensive purposes. The rattle of the musketry and the roar of the guns from the parade-ground proclaimed that the Sepoys had risen. There were then great alarm and confusion. Numbers of our people made for the Mint. The missionaries left Benares behind them, and set their faces towards Ramnuggur on their way to Chunar.* The civilians, some with their wives and families, sought refuge, in the first instance, in the Collector's Cutcherry, ascending to the roof of the building, where at least they were safe from capture.† But there was a great and reasonable fear that the Sikhs of the Treasury-guard,

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June 4—5.

The night afterwards.

* There were some exceptions to the general exodus of the missionaries. Mr. Leupholt, of the Church Missionary Society, seems to have stood fast in the mission premises with his flock of Native Christians. This excellent man afterwards rendered good service to the British

Government by exerting his influence, which was considerable in the neighbourhood, to obtain supplies for our European troops.

† The Commissioner was not of this party. He had gone to the Mint.

1857. rendered furious by the slaughter of their country-
 June 4—5. men, would seize the Government coin, and the crown jewels of their own exiled Queen, which were stored with it, and would then fire the building and attack our Christian people wheresoever they could be found.

Good ser-
 vices of
 Soorat Singh.

And that they would have struck heavily at us is not to be doubted, if one of their nation, a Sikh chief of good repute, had not come to our aid in the hour of our greatest need. This was the Sirdar Soorat Singh, who, after the second Sikh war, had been sent to reside at Benares, in honourable durance, and who had fully appreciated the generous treatment he had received from the English. He had unbounded confidence in Gubbins; and when the crisis arose, he manfully shouldered a double-barrelled gun and accompanied his English friend to the Cutcherry. Promptly and energetically he came forward to aid us, and by his explanations and persuasions softened down the anger of the Sikh soldiery, who might have been excused if they were burning to avenge the blood of their slaughtered comrades. Thus assured and admonished, they not only abstained from all acts of personal violence, but they quietly gave up the Government treasure and the Lahore jewels to the Europeans, to be conveyed to a place of safety.*

Pundit
 Gokool-
 Chund.

Nor was this noble-minded Sikh Sirdar the only friend who rose up to aid us in this conjuncture. Even from that hot-bed of Hindooism, Brah-

* The place of safety was within the strong cells of the Artillery Congee-House, whither the treasure was taken, by the advice, I believe, of Captain Opherts, who had always protested against the notion of making the same building available both as a refuge for the women and children and a storehouse for the treasure. Mr. Taylor, in his Official Narrative, says the treasure was taken to the Magazine, as reward for the fidelity and forbearance of the Sikhs, the Commissioner next morning very properly distributed ten thousand rupees among them.

1857.

June 4—5.

minism itself sent forth a staunch ally and potent deliverer to be a present help to us in our trouble. Pundit Gokool-Chund, a high-caste Brahmin, known to all, respected by all in Benares, flung all the weight of his influence into the scales in our favour. He was a servant of the Government—Nazir of the Judge's Court—and as such in constant intercourse with Gubbins. Had he been a Christian gentleman, he could not have striven, day and night, more ceaselessly and more successfully to succour our people. There was another, too, who put forth a protecting hand, and was earnest in his endeavours to allay the inquietude of the people. This was a wealthy and influential Hindoo noble—Rao Deonarain Singh—a loyal and devoted subject of the British Government, a man of high intelligence and enlightenment, liberal and humane. No words could exaggerate the importance of his services. Nor was the titular Rajah of Benares himself wanting in good offices to the English. On the night of that 4th of June, he succoured the missionary fugitives, and, from first to last, he placed all his resources at our disposal, and seemed honestly to wish well to our cause. Truly, it would have gone ill with our little handful of Christian people, if God had not raised up for us in our sorest need these staunch and powerful friends from among the multitude of the Heathen.*

Deonarain Singh.

The Rajah of Benares.

The prompt action of Soorut Singh saved the civilians at the Cutcherry. For many hours they remained there, anxious and uncertain, calculating the chances against them, but resolute to sell their lives at the highest price. But two hours after midnight a little party of English gentlemen, headed by

* See in Appendix a Memorandum on the Benares Rajahs.

1857. Gubbins, went forth in the broad moonlight to
 June 4—5. obtain the assistance of an European guard from the
 Mint to escort thither the fugitives at the Cutcherry.
 As they went, they were fired at by some Sepoys;
 but they returned, unharmed, with the guard, and
 safely conveyed their companions to the appointed
 place of refuge.* There the hours of morning dark-
 ness passed away in drear discomfort, and day
 dawned upon a scene of misery and confusion in the
 Mint. * Officers and ladies, masters and servants,
 huddled together, for the most part on the roof,
 without much respect of persons or regard for pro-
 prieties of costume. The Europeans who had been
 sent for their protection bivouacked in the lower
 rooms, many of them utterly worn out with the ex-
 hausting labours of the day; whilst outside in the
 compound, or enclosure, was a strange collection of
 carriages, buggies, palanquins, horses, bullocks, sheep,
 goats, and packages of all sizes and all kinds brought
 in for the provisioning of the garrison.

June 5—9. "The town is quite quiet," wrote Commissioner
 State of the Tucker to Lord Canning on the following morning,
 city. "in the midst," as he said, "of the utmost noise and
 confusion of this crowded building," which made it
 difficult to write at all, and was altogether so distract-
 ing, that, though a man of grave speech, he described
 it as "such a Pandemonium, that it was impossible
 to think, write, or do anything in it." There had

* This incident is made still
 brighter by an act of heroism which
 it is a pleasure to record. It is thus
 officially narrated: "Messrs. Gub-
 bins, Caulfield, and Denomet went
 in a buggy to the Mint, and Mr.
 Jenkinson, C. S., accompanied them
 on horseback. As the party was
 crossing the bridge, Mr. Jenkinson
 saw some ambushed Sepoys aiming

at the party in the buggy. There
 was no time for warning or for hesi-
 tation, and he at once reined back
 his horse, covering with his own
 body his companions in danger. It
 were far easier to praise such an act
 than to praise it worthily, and I
 praise it best by not praising it at
 all."—*Mr. Taylor's Official Narra-*
tive.

been an alarm in the course of the night of risings in the city; for the Mahomedans had hoisted the green flag, but nothing came of the demonstration. And days passed, but still there was quietude throughout Benares. All the circumstances of the "Sacred City of the Hindoos" being considered, it must be a source of wonder, not only that so little Christian blood was shed, but that there was so little resistance of any kind to the authority of the British Government.* "It is quite a miracle to me," wrote Commissioner Tucker to the Governor-General on the 9th of June, "how the city and station remain perfectly quiet. We all have to sleep at night in the Mint, but not a house or bungalow has been touched, and during the day everything goes on much as usual."† Wisely

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June 5—9.

* Up to this time only one English officer (Captain Guise) had been killed, and four wounded—all on the parade of the 4th of June. The wounded officers were Captain Dodgson, and Ensigns Tweedie, Chapman, and Hayter. A letter from Captain Dodgson states that the last-named was "shot by the Sikhs when they turned round and fired upon us." Young Hayter was shot in both thighs, and had a third wound below the knee. The latter was so painful that the limb was amputated; but he sunk under his sufferings, and died a week or two afterwards. There is something so touching in the brief account of the poor young soldier's last days, in the letter above quoted from Captain Dodgson to Mr. Tucker, that I cannot refrain from giving the following extract from it. "He bore his wounds with the utmost fortitude, and when told that there was no hope of recovery, said he hoped he was prepared to die. . . . I used to read the Prayers for the Sick to him, and many of the Psalms of his own choosing. The last he selected was the fifty-first. He got his over-

land letters when I was with him, a few days before he died, and kissed them again and again, and asked me to read them to him, which I did, poor boy!"—*M.S. Correspondence.*

† The following characteristic passage in the letter above quoted ought not to be withheld. "I do firmly believe," wrote Mr. Tucker, "that there is a special Divine influence at work on men's minds to keep them quiet. The few Europeans in the Mint and round the guns could do nothing to guard the Cantonment; but of all the three mutinous regiments not one seems to have thought of burning the station or plundering the houses of the residents. There is much prayer here, and I know that many prayers are offered up for us; and I fully believe that they are accepted at the Throne of Grace, and that this is the cause of the quiet we enjoy. Even with all the best possible arrangements that we can make, there is nothing to prevent the mutineers, who are hanging about, or the city rabble, from doing any mischief they please, but they do not attempt it."—*M.S. Correspondence.*

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June 5—9.

and vigorously was Gubbins now doing his work. He had sunk the judge in the magistrate. His court was closed, and he had taken the weight of the executive upon him. And now, partly by the fear, partly by the love he had inspired in the hearts of the people, he held them in restraint, and the great city lay hushed beneath his hand.

State of the
Rural Dis-
tricts.

But although there was extraordinary repose in the city, in the surrounding districts violence and anarchy arose with a suddenness that was quite astounding. It was not merely that the mutinous Sepoys, hanging about the adjacent villages, were inciting others to rebellion (this was to be expected), but a great movement from within was beginning to make itself felt upon the surface of rural society, and for a while all traces of British rule were rapidly disappearing from the face of the land. Into the real character and general significance of this movement I do not purpose here to inquire. The investigation is an extensive one, and must be deliberately undertaken. It is enough, in this place, to speak of immediate results. The dispersion of the Native soldiery on the 4th of June was followed almost immediately by disorder and rapine in the contiguous country. A few days sufficed to sweep away law and order, and to produce a revolution of property, astonishing even to those who were best acquainted with the character and temper of the people. "I could not," wrote Mr. Tucker on the 13th, "have believed that the moment the hand of Government was removed there would have been so sudden a rising of landholders to plunder each other and people on the roads.* All the large landholders and auction-purchasers are paralysed

* "The Native idea now is," he adds, "that British rule has slipped off, and that it is every man for himself."

and dispossessed, their agents being frequently murdered and their property destroyed."* To arrest this new danger, which threatened to become a gigantic one, overwhelming, irrepressible, our people had now to put forth all their strength.

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June 5—9.

On the 9th the Government of India caused Martial Law to be proclaimed in the divisions of Benares and Allahabad. On the same day, Mr. Tucker, not knowing that already the Legislature had provided the extraordinary powers which he sought†—nay, even more than he sought—wrote to the Governor-General, suggesting that he should place the Benares division "beyond the reach of Regulation Law, and give every civil officer, having the full power of magistrate, the power of life and death." "I would prefer this to Martial Law," he added, "as I do not think the greater proportion of the military can be entrusted with the power of life and death. The atrocious murders which have taken place have roused the English blood, and a very slight circumstance would cause Natives to be shot or hung. I would, therefore, much prefer retaining the powers in the hands of those who have been accustomed to weigh and to value evidence. No civilian is likely to order a man to be executed without really good cause."‡

June 9.
Punitive
enactments.

Time soon exploded the error contained in these last words. But the Benares Commissioner, though a little blinded by class prejudice, was right when he wrote about the hot English blood, which forbade the judgment of a cool brain. Already our military officers were hunting down criminals of all kinds, and hanging them up with as little compunction as

* See *ante*, vol. i. p. 187.

† The Act, of which a summary has been given (Book iv. chap. iv.), though passed on the 30th of May,

did not receive the sanction of the Governor-General before the 31st of June.

‡ MS. Correspondence.

1857.
June 9.

though they had been pariah-dogs or jackals, or vermin of a baser kind. One cotemporary writer has recorded that, on the morning after the disarming parade, the first thing he saw from the Mint was a "row of gallowses." A few days afterwards military courts or commissions were sitting daily, and sentencing old and young to be hanged with indiscriminate ferocity. These executions have been described as "Colonel Neill's hangings." But Neill left Benares four or five days after the outbreak, and it did not devolve on him to confirm the sentences, of which I have heard the strongest reprobation. On one occasion, some young boys, who, perhaps, in mere sport had flaunted rebel colours and gone about beating tom-toms, were tried and sentenced to death. One of the officers composing the court, a man unsparing before an enemy under arms, but compassionate, as all brave men are, towards the weak and helpless, went with tears in his eyes to the commanding officer, imploring him to remit the sentence passed against these juvenile offenders, but with little effect on the side of mercy.* And what was done with some show of formality, either of military or of criminal law, was as nothing, I fear, weighed against what was done without any formality at all. Volunteer hanging parties went out into the districts, and amateur executioners were not wanting to the occasion. One gentleman boasted of the numbers he had finished off quite "in an artistic manner," with mango-trees for gibbets and elephants for drops, the victims of this

* The general reader, however, must not calculate years in such a case as they would be calculated in Europe. What, estimated by years, is a boy in England is a man in

India—a husband, a father, with all the full-grown passions of maturity—and an equal sense of personal independence and responsibility.

wild justice being strung up, as though for pastime, in "the form of a figure of eight."

1857.
June 9.

This, it is to be presumed, was the martial law, of which such graphic details have been given by cotemporary writers, without a prevision of publicity.* But the Acts of the Legislative Council, under the strong hand of the Executive, fed the gallows with equal prodigality, though, I believe, with greater discrimination. It was a special immunity of this Benares mutiny that the prison-gates were not thrown open, and the city deluged with a flood of convicted crime. The inmates of the gaol remained in their appointed places. But even this had its attendant evils. For as crime increased, as increase it necessarily did, prison-room was wanted, and was not to be found. The great receptacle of the criminal classes was gorged to overflowing. The guilty could not be suffered wholly to escape. So the Gibbet disposed of the higher class of malefactors, and the Lash scored the backs of the lower, and sent them afloat again on the waves of tumult and disorder. But, severe as Gubbins was when the crisis was at its height, he restrained his hand when the worst had passed, and it had ceased to be an expedient of mercy to strike into the hearts of the people that terror, which diminishes crime and all its punitive consequences.

Meanwhile, other sources of anxiety were developing themselves in more remote places. One incident must be narrated here as immediately connected with the outbreak of the 4th of June. The story of the

June 5.
The mutiny
at Jaunpore.

* See especially a letter, written by a private of the Seventy-eighth Highlanders, which was published in the *Times*, and quoted at some length by Mr. Montgomery Martin.

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June 5.

Loodhianah Regiment of Sikhs has not yet been fully told. There was a detachment of it at Jaunpore, a civil station, some forty miles from Benares. When news arrived on the 5th of June that the Thirty-seventh had revolted, and were pouring into the district, they made demonstrations of fidelity to their British officers; but when later tidings came that the head-quarters of their own regiment had been fired on by the Europeans, they rose at once in open mutiny. Lieutenant Mara, the officer commanding them, was shot down. Mr. Cuppage, joint-magistrate, on his way to the jail, shared the same fate. The Treasury was plundered. And all surviving Europeans, after a humiliating surrender of their arms, were driven to seek safety in flight. British government was expunged, as it had been at Azinghur, and its chief representatives were glad to find a hiding-place for themselves in quarters which, a little time before, their *flat* could have swept away like summer dust. Then the station was given up to plunder; and the mutiny of a few Sikh mercenaries grew into a general insurrection of the people. The houses of the English were gutted and burnt. The soldiery, burdened with money-bags, having gone off towards Oude, the plunder of "the Treasury was completed by decrepit old women and wretched little boys, who had never seen a rupee in their lives."* And all over the district, the state of things, brought about by our settlement operations and our law courts, dis-

* Mr. Taylor's Official Narrative. The writer adds: "In the district not a semblance of authority was left to any one. Those who had lost their estates under our rule thought this a good time to regain them; those who had not, thought that they could make a little profit by plundering their weaker neigh-

bours; the bolder spirits thought to secure more brilliant advantages by intercourse with the rebel powers in Oude." In no other district, Mr. Taylor observes, were "auction purchasers more numerous, old Zemindars more powerful, or the present landholders on worse terms among themselves."

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June.

appeared like the bursting of a bubble. The very presence of our fugitive people, though powerless and forlorn, was an offence and an abomination to the now-dominant class, who drove them from their sanctuary in the house of a friendly Rajah to take refuge in an indigo factory. And it became one of the Benares Commissioner's greatest cares to rescue Mr. Fane and his companions from the dangers which then beset them. Having discovered their abode, he sent out "a party of Europeans and volunteers to bring them into Benares."*

Troops were now coming up every day from below. Benares was safe. Other stations were to be saved. The best service that could be rendered to the State was the prompt despatch of reinforcements to the upper country—and most of all to Allahabad and Cawnpore. This service was entrusted to Mr. Archibald Pollock.† True to his great historical name, he threw himself into the work with an amount of energy and activity which bore the best fruits. Every kind of available conveyance was picked up and turned promptly to account in the furtherance of the eagerly looked-for Europeans, whose appearance was ever welcomed by our peril-girt people as a great deliverance. Nor was want of sufficient conveyance the only difficulty to be overcome. There was a want of provisions for Europeans, especially of flour and rum; and Mr. Tucker wrote eagerly to Lord Canning to send up commissariat stores of every kind for the soldiery, "as European necessities are not to be had here in any quantity." He was

Despatch of
troops
upwards.

* Mr. Tucker to Lord Canning, June 9th. In this letter the fugitives are said to have consisted of sixteen men, five ladies, and eleven children.

† The youngest son of General Sir George Pollock. He was then joint magistrate of Benares.

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June.

very eager at this time to save the treasure in neighbouring civil stations along the main line, as Mirzapore and Ghazepore, and he sent parties of Europeans by steamer to bring it off in safety to Benares. It was, moreover, a great object to keep the white troops in motion, and thus to display European strength, first at one point, then at another, and by means of a few to make an appearance of many, as in a mimic theatre of war. At once to have recovered Azimghur and Jaunpore, from which we had been so ignominiously expelled, would have been a great stroke; and the Commissioner wrote to Lord Canning, saying that if the Government would allow him to divert two hundred Europeans from the main line of operations, the magistrates and other civil officers might return to their posts, and British authority might be re-established. But troops could not be spared for the purpose, and it was left to another day and to other means, whereof due record will be made hereafter, to prove to the people of those districts that the English had not been swept out of the land. The narrative must now follow the upward line of the Ganges to the next great city of note.

Allahabad.

About seventy miles beyond Benares, at the confluence of the Ganges and the Jumna, lies the city of Allahabad. It has none of that wealth of structural beauty which renders Benares so famous among the cities of the East. Its attractions are derived chiefly from its position, at the extreme point or promontory of the Doab, formed by the meeting of the waters. The broad rivers rushing down towards the sea, and mingling as they go their streams of varied colour and varied motion—the one of yellow-brown,

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June.

thick and turbid, the other blue, clear, and sparkling* —the green banks between which they flow, the rich cultivation of the inner country dotted with groves and villages, make a landscape pleasant to the eye. But the town itself, principally situated on the Jumna, has little to command admiration. It has been called in derision by natives of Hindostan, "Fukeerabad," or the city of beggars; but the Fort, which towers above it, massive and sublime, with the strength of many ages in its solid masonry, imparts peculiar dignity to the place. Instinct with the historical traditions of the two elder dynasties, it had gathered new power from the hands of the English conqueror, and, garrisoned by English troops, might almost have defied the world.

It would be difficult to exaggerate the military importance of the situation at the junction of the two rivers, commanding, as it does, the great fluvial thoroughfare of Hindostan, and also the high road by land from the Upper to the Lower Provinces. Both in a strategical and political sense, its security had ever been of great moment; but the recent acquisition of Oude had rendered it still more essential that it should be safely in hand. In this powerful fortress of Allahabad was an arsenal stored with all the munitions of war, and an array of guns in position

* Historians and poets alike delight to describe the meeting of the waters. "The half-modernised fortress," says Trotter, "looks grandly down on the meeting of the clearer Jumna with the yellow waters of the broad Ganges" (*History of the British Empire in India*); Waterfield (*Indian Ballads*) sings of "the sisters blue and brown;" and again, "Where Yamuna leaps blue to Ganga's arms." And Bholonauth Chunder (*Travels of a Hindoo*), writing in prose, but scarcely less

poetically, says: "The spot where the Sister Nuddas (Greek Nyades) meet makes a magnificent prospect. The Ganges has a turbid, muddy current—the Jumna, a sparkling stream. Each at first tries to keep itself distinct, till, happy to meet after a long parting, they run into each other's embrace, and, losing themselves in one, flow in a common stream. The Ganges strikes the fancy as more maternally of the two—the Jumna a gayer, youthful sister."

1357. commanding the approaches from the country below. And their possession by the enemy would have been a disaster beyond compare. Some time before, Sir James Outram had suggested to Lord Canning the expediency of adopting measures for the greater security of Allahabad, and had warned him of the, at least possible, danger of such a mischance befalling us.* I do not know whether these warnings were remembered — warnings afterwards repeated most emphatically by Sir Henry Lawrence; but there was no place to which Lord Canning turned his thoughts with greater anxiety and alarm — no place to which he was more eager to send relief in the shape of European troops.

Tidings of the great disaster at Meerut reached Allahabad on the 12th of May, and a few days afterwards came the story of the progress of the rebellion, and the restoration of the Mogul Emperors of Delhi. At the beginning of May, the force posted at Allahabad consisted of a single Sepoy regiment, the Sixth, under the command of Colonel Simpson, which had marched in from Jummalpoore at the latter end of March, relieving the Eleventh, under Colonel Finnes. But on the 9th, a wing of the Ferozpoore Regiment of Sikhs had arrived from Mirzapore; and ten days later two troops of Oude Irregular Horse came in, under orders from Sir Henry Lawrence, to place themselves under the civil authorities. Shortly afterwards sixty European invalids were brought in from Chunar. The bulk of the Native troops occupied their Lines in the Cantonment, which lay at a distance of two or three miles from the Fort between the two great rivers.

* "I myself am more shocked than surprised," he wrote from Baghdad to the Chairman of the East India Company, on first hearing of the outbreak, "for I have long dreaded something of the sort; and you may recollect I told you of the warning that I gave to Lord Canning when I was last at Calcutta, and suggested that measures should be adopted for the better security of Allahabad." — *June 8, 1857. MS.*

1857.

Detachments were posted in the Fort. The principal civil officers were Mr. Chester, the commissioner, and Mr. Court, the magistrate—both men of courage and resolution, not easily shaken or disturbed. They and the other civilians, as well as the military officers, dwelt in comfortable and pleasant garden-houses in the European station, without an anxious thought of the future to disturb them.

In the eyes of the commanding officer, and, indeed, of every Englishman who held a commission under him, the Sixth was true to the core, and was thoroughly to be trusted. It was one of those regiments in which the officers looked lovingly on their soldiers as on their children; cared for their comforts, promoted their amusements, and lived amongst them as comrades. They had done so much for their men, and seen so many indications of what at least simulated gratitude and affection, that it would have been to their discredit if they had mistrusted a regiment which had such good reason to be faithful to the English gentlemen who had treated them with the kindness of parents. But the civil officers, who had none of the associations and the sympathies which made the centurions of the Sixth Regiment ever willing to place their lives in the hands of the native soldiery, saw everywhere grounds of suspicion and causes of alarm. There was evidently a wide-spread feeling of mistrust both in the City and in the Cantonment.* All kinds of vague reports were in the

Colonel Simpson and the Sixth.

State of popular feeling.

* Mr. Willock, joint magistrate, says in his official report, "As each day passed some fresh rumour was circulated regarding the state of public feeling in the city. Agents of the rebel leaders were evidently busy poisoning the minds of the people. . . . The Bazaar was closed, and it was very evident that an outbreak in the city would follow an émeute of the soldiery. The men of the city warned the magistrates against the insidolity of the Sepoys, and the Sepoys cautioned their officers against the city people, protesting against the tales that had been circulated of their lukewarmness towards Government."

1857. air. Whether the disturbing faith had grown up spontaneously in the minds of the Natives, or whether the great lie had been maliciously propagated by active emissaries of evil, it was believed that a heavy blow was to be struck at the religion of the people.* At one time it was reported that the English had determined to serve out the greased cartridges on a given day, and that the regiment would be paraded on the glacis of the Fort, in a position commanded by our guns, and blown into the air if they disobeyed orders. Then it was said that the Sepoys had determined to prevent the treasure being moved into the Fort;† and again, that the Sikhs were conspiring with the Native Infantry for a joint attack upon the English. At the same time, the price of grain and of other kinds of food rose in the market, and the common feeling of disquietude was enhanced by the discontent occasioned by the dearth of provisions, which was always attributed to the agency of the English.

May 22.
Conflicting
facts.

In this state of uncertainty, Colonel Simpson proposed to betake himself with his regiment to the Fort. This movement was strenuously opposed by Mr. Court, the magistrate, and the project was abandoned.

* I have remarked, and with much uniformity of observation, that these monstrous reports of "forcible conversion," or destruction of caste, were most rife where the Mahomedan population was the densest. Allahabad contained an unusual number of Mussulmans, whilst in Benares there was a great preponderance of Hindoos; but these reports appear to have been circulated more freely in the former than in the latter city.

† It was said that this ought to have opened the eyes of Colonel Simpson to the real state of his corps. But the fact is, that the circumstance referred to in the text was nothing more than an alleged

conversation between a Native officer of the Irregular Cavalry and another of the Sixth. The former was said to have asked whether the Sixth would allow the treasure to be removed, and the latter to have answered, "Some of them would not until they had received their arrears of pay." "This," says Colonel Simpson, "was immediately reported to the Adjutant, who did not credit it. On the 28rd I made poor Plunkett and Stewart inquire into the business, and the latter reported to me there was no truth in it, as the Native officer and men of the Sixth guard denied the accusation."

1857.
May 22.

On the same evening a council of the leading civil and military officers was held, and it was determined that the women and children only should be removed next morning into the Fort. But next morning, before daybreak, there was a change of plan. The order, which had decreed that "no (adult) male should be allowed to enter the Fort," was cancelled, in spite of Court's remonstrances, and two hours before noon "there was a regular flight to the Fort of men, women, and children, carrying with them all the property they could."* But later in the day the energy of the magistrate prevailed, and the non-military members of the community were enrolled into a volunteer guard, to patrol the city and station, accompanied by some mounted police.

As the month wore on to its close, appearances seemed rather to improve. Some apprehensions had been entertained lest the great Mahomedan festival of the *Eed*, which was to be celebrated on the 25th, should stir all the inflammatory materials gathered together in Allahabad into a blaze. The day, however, passed over without any disturbance; and at a parade held in the evening, two Sepoys, who, on the preceding day, had given up a couple of Mehwattees, charged with tampering with their fidelity, were

May 25.
Lip-loyalty.

* Official Report of Mr. Fendall Thompson, officiating magistrate. Colonel Simpson, in a narrative of events with which he has furnished me, says, "On the 23rd of May, the ladies, children, and non-military were ordered into the Fort for security, in consequence of the various reports received by the magistrate regarding the unsettled state of the city of Allahabad, aggravated by the high price of grain." It might be gathered from this that the magistrate had approved of the removal

to the Fort of the non-military males, whereas the official report states that he had in reality protested against it. Colonel Simpson, however, says, in another memorandum, that "a notice to this effect" (i.e. the removal of "ladies, children, and non-military") "was circulated by the magistrate throughout the station, and regimentally by two of his sowars." Colonel Simpson says that it was signed both by himself and Court.

1857.
May 25.

publicly promoted.* But this spasm of energy seems to have been designed only to throw dust into the eyes of the authorities. It is stated that, at the very same time, they were intriguing with the Oude Cavalry. Perhaps the arrest was designed to irritate the minds of the people of the city. If so, it was a successful movement; for it was soon noised abroad that a rescue would be attempted, and so the prisoners were removed to the Fort.

After this there were outward quietude and security, for although with the new month there arose increased excitement in the city, still more favourable appearances presented themselves in the cantonment. The Sepoys of the Sixth, seemingly not satisfied with the latent loyalty of quiescence, quickened into energy and enthusiasm, and demanded to be led against the rebels of Delhi. News of their noble offer was promptly telegraphed to Calcutta, and Lord Canning sent back by the wires a cordial expression of the thanks of Government. But to the civilians at least it was apparent that the danger was not passed, for every day the excitement became greater in the city.

from

Affairs were in this state when news came from Benares that the Sepoys stationed there had risen in revolt, and that they had been dispersed by Neill's Europeans. The telegraph brought the first tidings to Simpson, who, as an initial measure of precaution, issued orders that the gates of the Fort should be closed night and day, and no one, of whatsoever

* Sir John Malcolm writes of the *Mahawattas*, that, "although usually reckoned Mahomedans, it is difficult to say whether they are Mahomedans or Hindoos; they partake of both religions, and are the most desperate rogues in India. They

are turbulent, vindictive, cunning, cruel, robbers, murderers, and assassins—yet they are faithful, undaunted guards and servants to those whose *nimuk* (salt) they eat."—*Malcolm Report*, p. 578, *note*.

1857.
June 4.

colour or creed, admitted without a passport.* The next step was to guard the approaches to Allahabad. The road from Benares ran on the other side of the Ganges, which was crossed by a bridge of boats at a point nearly opposite to the Fort, to the suburb of Darao-gunj. It seemed to be so certain that the Benares mutineers would make for Allahabad, that, on a requisition of the Magistrate, a Company of the Sixth was sent, with two guns, to defend the bridge by which the passage of the river must have been made. At the same time, a detachment of the Oude Irregular Cavalry was posted on an open space between the bridge-head and the cantonment, so as to command all the approaches to the latter. And no one then seemed to doubt that those Native guards would defend the bridge and the station as staunchly and as truly as if the insurgents had been people of other races and other creeds.

It will, perhaps, never be known to the full satisfaction of the historical inquirer whether the Sixth Regiment was saturated with that deepest treachery which simulates fidelity for a time, in order that it may fall with more destructive force on its unsuspecting victim, or whether it had been, throughout the month of May, in that uncertain, wavering condition which up to the moment of the final outburst has no determined plan of operations. The officers of the regiment believed that the men were staunch to the core. Outwardly, there were no indications of

* "From this period (May 25) until the 4th of June more or less excitement prevailed in the city of Allahabad, and on that date the mutiny at Benares took place, and was reported to me by telegraphic wire. On the same evening I ordered the Fort Gates to be closed day and

night, and neither European nor Native was allowed ingress or egress without a pass, so as more particularly to guard against any tamperers from Benares or from the city of Allahabad."—*Memorandum by Colonel Simpson. MS.*

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hostility. But when news came that the Native regiments at Benares had risen, and that the Europeans had fallen upon them, the long-abiding vacillation rose into robust resolution, and the regiment sprung, as it were, in a moment upon its prey. Whether it was in a wild panic of fear, believing that Neill and the Europeans would soon be upon them, or whether in the belief that the time for action had now come, as they would probably soon be joined by the Sepoys from Benares, the evening of the 6th of June found them ripe for any deed of violence.

But even as the sun was setting on that day—the last sun that ever was to set upon this model regiment—there was unbroken faith in its fidelity. The warning voice, however, was not silent. The Adjutant of the Sixth received a letter from a non-commissioned officer of the regiment, telling him that the news from Benares had caused much excitement in the Lines. The Adjutant took the letter to the Colonel. But Simpson could not admit that anything was wrong. He added, however, that at the sunset parade, which was to be held for the promulgation of the thanks of the Governor-General to the regiment, the temper of the men would be clearly ascertained.

The Thanks-
giving

The parade was held. The thanks of the Governor-General were read. The Commissioner, who had attended at the request of the Colonel, addressed the regiment in Hindostanee, praising them for the loyalty they had evinced. The Sepoys appeared to be in the highest spirits; and they sent up a ringing cheer in response to the stirring words. When the parade was over, the officers, for the most part, rode or walked to the Mess. With Colonel Simpson rode Captain Plunkett—an officer of the Sixth, who had

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served for more than twenty years with the regiment. He spoke with delight of the pride he felt in its noble conduct, and his faith in its enduring fidelity. Thus conversing they rode to the Mess-house, where other officers had assembled, and were discussing the events of the day. Among them was Captain Birch, the Fort-Adjutant, who besought the Colonel to recall the guns posted at the Bridge of Boats and to post them in the Fort, where they were more needed. To this, Simpson esteeming the Fort to be his first charge, and having been warned not to trust the Sikhs, of whom the garrison mainly consisted, gave his consent; and orders went forth for their recall.*

There was a goodly gathering in the Mess-house, for the number of officers had been recently increased by the arrival of a party of young cadets, who had been ordered to do duty with the Sixth—mere boys, with the roses of England on their cheeks and the kisses of their mothers still fresh upon their lips. Without any sense of ills to come, old and young took their places at the dinner-table in perfect serenity of mind. There was at least one faithful regiment in the service! The civilians, equally assured, went to their houses and dined; and did as was their wont in the evening, wrapped themselves up in early slumber, or kept themselves awake with the excitement of cards. Some, indeed, who had slept in the Fort on the preceding night, were now again in their own homes. On no evening, perhaps, since the first startling news had come from Delhi and Meerut, had there been so little trepidation—so little excitement. But about nine o'clock the whole

The last
Mess-dinner
of the Sixth.

* These warnings came from Sir Henry Lawrence at Lucknow and Sir Hugh Wheeler at Cawnpore. Simpson was advised not to trust the Sikhs, and to man the Fort with all the Europeans available at Allahabad.

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European community of Allahabad were startled by the sound of a bugle-call announcing the alarm. The Colonel had left the Mess, and was walking homewards, when the unexpected sound smote upon his ears and urged him onward to his house, where he called for his horse, mounted, and rode for the quarter-guard. Thither many other officers had repaired on the first sound of the bugle-notes. The truth was soon apparent to them. The faithful Sixth had revolted.

Revolt of the
Regiment.

The story was this: The detachment sent to defend the Bridge had been the first to rise, as it had been first to learn how the guns had been turned upon the Native troops at Benares, and whilst Simpson with his officers was dining comfortably at the Mess-house, the orders, which he had despatched for the withdrawal of the Artillery from Darao-gunj, had been sternly resisted. The Sepoy Guard, told off as an escort, rose against the Artillery-officer, Lieutenant Harward, and declared that the guns should be taken not to the Fort, but to the Cantonment; and the rest of the detachment turned out, armed and accoutred, to enforce the demand. True to the noble regiment to which he belonged, Harward hastened to the post of the Oude Irregulars, which lay between the Bridge-head and the Cantonment, to bring up succours to overawe the Sepoys and to save the guns. The Irregulars were commanded by Lieutenant Alexander—a young officer of the highest promise—who at once responded to Harward's call, and ordered out his men. Tardily and sulkily they pretended to obey. Whilst they were forming, a hastily-written note was despatched by Harward to the Fort. The sound of the guns, grating along the road to Cantonments, was distinctly heard; and the Irregu-

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lars, headed by Alexander and accompanied by Harward, whom the former had mounted on a spare horse, then rode out to intercept the mutineers. They soon came upon the party, under the broad light of the moon; but when the order was given to charge the guns, and the English officers dashed at them, only three troopers responded to the stirring summons. The rest fraternised with the enemy. Alexander, as he rode forward and was rising in his stirrups to strike, was shot through the heart, and Harward narrowly escaped with his life.* The mutineers, who had before sent out two of their party to warn their comrades, and had, it is stated, sent up signal rockets, now marched with the guns to the Lines, and when their colonel appeared on parade, the whole regiment was in the throes of rebellion.

Escape of
Colonel
Simpson.

It was then too late for the voice of authority to overawe or to persuade. Simpson saw that there was great excitement on the parade-ground. Some of his officers were commanding their men to fall in, but there was little appearance of obedience. And when he rode up to inquire why the guns had been brought on parade, two Sepoys of the Guard replied by firing upon him. Expostulation was vain. A volley of musketry responded to his words; and he saw that everywhere on the parade-ground the Sepoys were shooting down their officers. Seeing that there was no hope of saving the colours, he then rode to the left of the Lines, where some men of the Light

* "During the night, the few Irregulars who had remained staunch came in, bringing with them the body of their officer, Lieutenant Alexander, who had been shot, as before related. His body bore witness to

the mad cruelty of his enemies, for besides the shot in his breast, which killed him, were sabre-cuts all over his head and face."—*Mr. Thompson's Report.*

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Company, in whom there still seemed to be a feeling of compunction, if not of regard for their chief, clustered, unarmed and unaccoutred, round his horse, and besought him to ride for his life to the Fort. Hoping still to save the Treasury, he rode, accompanied by Lieutenant Currie, in the direction of that building, but fired upon from all sides, he soon saw that the case was hopeless.* He had now well nigh run the gauntlet of danger, and though a ball had grazed his helmet, he had providentially escaped; but opposite the Mess-house, as he galloped towards the Fort, the Guard formed in line at the gate and fired upon him. A musket-ball took effect on his horse; but Simpson was still unhurt, save by a blow on the arm from a spent shot; and the last dying efforts of his charger landed him safely within the walls of the Fort, covered with the blood of the noble animal that had borne him.

Massacre of
the Ensigns.

Meanwhile, others less fortunate had fallen beneath the musketry of the mutineers. Currie, who had accompanied the Colonel to the Treasury, escaped the fire of the guards and sentries; Captain Gordon and Lieutenant Hicks escaped also, as did two of the cadets, to the Fort;† but Plunkett, with his score years of good service in the Sixth, Adjutant Steward, Quartermaster Hawes, and Ensigns Pringle and Munro were shot down on parade. Fort-Adjutant Birch and Lieutenant Innes of the Engineers were

* "As my duty was to save the Treasury, if possible, I proceeded in that direction, when I was immediately fired on by the whole guard of thirty-two men on one flank, with a night-picket of thirty men on the other. The detachment of the Third Guide Irregular Cavalry remained passive, and did not fire."—*Memorandum of Colonel Simpson. MS.*

† Hicks and the cadets (Pearson and Woodgate) were at the Daroogunj when the mutiny broke out. They were made prisoners and carried towards Cantonments, but, in their eagerness to join in the plunder of the Treasury, the Sepoys suffered them to depart, and afterwards they made good their escape by twice swimming across the river,

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also killed, and eight of the unposted boy-ensigns were murdered in cold blood by the insurgent Sepoys.* The poor boys were leaving the Mess-house, when the brutal soldiery fell upon them. Seven were slaughtered on the ground; but one, a boy of sixteen, escaped with his wounds, and hid himself in a ravine. Having supported himself for some days, merely, it would seem, by water from a brook, he was discovered in his hiding-place, dragged before one of the insurgent leaders, and confined in a serai with a Native catechist. The faith of the convert was giving way to the sufferings which he endured, when Arthur Check, who had been scarcely a month in India, exhorted his companion to be steadfast in the faith. "Oh, my friend," he is reported to have said, "whatever may come to us, do not deny the Lord Jesus." He was rescued, but he was not saved. On the 16th of June the poor boy died in the Fort from exposure, exhaustion, and neglected wounds.†

It was fortunate that the bulk of our people were In the Fort, shut up in the Fort, where no external perils could assail them. But there was danger within the walls. A company of the Sixth formed part of the garrison, and the temper of the Sikhs was doubtful. When the noise of firing was first heard it was believed that the Benares mutineers had arrived, and that the Sepoys of Allahabad were giving them a warm reception. But at a later hour the truth broke in upon them; and all doubt was removed by the appearance

* It has been commonly stated that these poor boys were killed whilst sitting at the Mess-table. I am assured, however, on the best authority that this is a mistake. Few incidents of the mutiny have excited greater horror than this, which is

familiarly spoken of as the massacre of the "poor little griffins."

† See Mr. Owen's Journal. It has been erroneously stated elsewhere that he died in the hands of the enemy, on the day of Noill's arrival at Allahabad, the 11th of June.

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of the Commandant Simpson, smeared with the blood of his wounded charger. His first care was to order the Sepoys of the Sixth to be disarmed. This duty was entrusted to a detachment of the Sikh corps, under Lieutenant Brasyer—an officer who had won for himself a commission by his gallantry in the great battles of the Punjab, and who now proved his mastery over his men by forcing them to do a distasteful service. With the news that the Benares Sepoys of the Regular Army had been mown down by the white troops, came also tidings that Gordon's regiment had been riddled by our grape-shot. It was, therefore, fearfully probable that the offended nationality of the Sikhs at Allahabad would rise against their Christian masters, partly in revenge and partly in fear. Happily the treasure was outside the Fort. Had the design of bringing it within the walls not been abandoned, the love of loot and the thirst of blood would have prevailed together, and Allahabad might have been lost.

It was, in truth, a most critical moment. Had the men of the Sixth Regiment and the Sikhs then in the Fort made common cause with each other, the little Christian garrison could have made but feeble resistance against such odds. The Sepoys, who were posted, for purposes of defence, at the main-gate, had, on the first sound of firing in Cantonments, been ordered to load their pieces: so they were ready for immediate action. The Sikhs were drawn up fronting the main-gate, and before them were the guns, manned by the invalid Artillerymen from Chunar, in whom the energy of earlier days was revived by this unexpected demand upon them. And at a little distance, in overawing position, were posted little knots of European volunteers, armed

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and loaded, ready on the first sign of resistance to fire down from the ramparts upon the mutineers. There is something very persuasive always in the lighting of port-fires, held in the steady hands of English Artillerymen. The Sepoys, charged to the brim with sedition, would fain have resisted the orders of the white men, but these arrangements thoroughly overawed them. They sullenly piled arms at the word of command, and were expelled from the Fort to join their comrades in rebellion.

The first danger was now surmounted. Those who knew best what was passing in the minds of the Native soldiery of all races, clearly saw the magnitude of the crisis. It is impossible to over-estimate the disastrous consequences that would have ensued from the seizure and occupation by the enemy of the Fort of Allahabad, with all its mighty munitions of war. One officer, however, was prepared at any risk to prevent this catastrophe by precipitating another. Stimulated, perhaps, by the noble example set by Willoughby at Delhi, Russell, of the Artillery, laid trains of gunpowder from the magazines to a point, at which he stood during the disarming of the Sixth, near the loaded guns; and if mutiny had then been successful, he would have fired the trains and blown the magazines, with all the surrounding buildings, into the air.* The expulsion of the Hindostanee Sepoys, effected by Brasyer's cool courage and admirable management, averted for the moment this great calamity; and all that was left undone, did itself afterwards by the help of the national character of the Sikhs.

* I first read this anecdote in Mr. Clive Bayley's Official Report. Mr. Bayley has stated the fact on the authority of Mr. Court, the magistrate, whose testimony is not to be questioned.

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Rising in the
City.

Such was the mutiny of the Sixth Regiment—in its purely military aspects one of the most remarkable in the whole history of the war, and, memorable in itself, still more memorable for its immediate popular results. For the great city rose in an instant. The suburbs caught the contagion of rebellion; far into the rural districts the pestilence spread, and order and authority lay prostrate and moribund. If a general rising of the people had been skilfully planned and deliberately matured, there could not, to all outward appearance, have been a more simultaneous or a more formidable insurrection. But, in truth, there was no concert, no cohesion. Every man struck for himself. In not one of the great cities of India was there a more varied population than in Allahabad. But there was a greater preponderance than is often seen of the Mahomedan element. And it was a perilous kind of Mahomedanism; for large numbers of the ancient dependents of decayed Mogul families were cherishing bitter memories of the past, and writhing under the universal domination of the English. The dangerous classes, indeed, were many, and they seem to have been ripe for revolt on the first sign of the rising of the soldiery. So, whilst the events above recorded were passing in the Fort, in the city and in the station were such tumult and confusion as had never been known before. All through the night of the 6th of June licence and rapine had full sway. The goal was broken open, and the prisoners released. Vast numbers of convicted criminals, with the irons still rattling on their limbs, rushed forth, to the consternation of the peaceful inhabitants, to turn their newly-acquired liberty to account in the indulgence of all the worst passions of humanity. To the English station they made their way in large bodies, shouting